

Comprehensive Plan Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element

Proposed Amendments

~~DELETIONS~~

ADDITIONS

800 Overview 800

800.1 This ~~e~~Element addresses the future of parks, recreation, and open space in Washington, DC ~~the District of Columbia~~. It recognizes the important role parks play in recreation, aesthetics, health and wellness, neighborhood character, ~~and~~ environmental quality, and resilience. The element also recognizes that parks have the potential to bring people together across social, economic, and racial divides. It includes policies on related topics, such as recreational facility development, the use of private open space, ~~and~~ the creation of trails to better connect the ~~city's~~ District's open spaces and neighborhoods, and the support of resilience through the restoration of natural systems. Finally, this element includes policies and actions that support the delivery of equitable access, great spaces, and exceptional experiences. 800.1

800.1a Text Box: Parks, Recreation, and Open Spaces in the District
Since the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, Washington, DC, has continued to enhance its parks, recreational, and open spaces. The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) now manages more than 900 acres of green space, 34 urban gardens and five partner urban farms, 375 parks, 12 dog parks, 95 playgrounds, 135 athletic fields, 336 courts, 76 recreation facilities, and 50 aquatic facilities and features. In 2018, Washington, DC, was ranked the third fittest city on the American Fitness Indexⁱ and was ranked the fourth best park city.ⁱⁱ 800.1a

800.2 The critical parks, recreation, and open space issues facing Washington, DC ~~the District of Columbia~~ are addressed in this ~~e~~Element. These include:

- Coordinating and sharing ~~Coordination and shared~~ stewardship between Washington, DC ~~the District of Columbia~~ and the federal government on park and open space planning, design, and management to produce better outcomes for District residents;
- Providing additional recreational land and facilities in areas of the ~~city~~ District that are currently underserved and in newly developing areas;
- Maintaining, upgrading, and improving existing parks and recreation facilities as key features of ~~successful~~ vibrant neighborhoods in Washington, DC; ~~the District~~;
- Increasing funding for capital improvements and operations through partnerships and creative strategies;
- Fostering community health so that residents can seek healthier lifestyles regardless of income, ability, or employment;
- Leveraging open space to support resilience, including flood

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mitigation, well-connected habitats on land and water, an increased tree canopy, and strong ecosystems for wildlife; and

- Designing parks, trails, and recreational facilities to improve the safety of staff and visitors. 800.2

800.2a

Text Box: Parks, Open Spaces, and Natural Resources

The Sustainable DC Plan envisions a District that has high-quality, well-connected habitats on land and water, and that provides strong corridors and ecosystems for wildlife. Washington, DC, will conserve and manage these natural resources to enhance biodiversity, control stormwater, reduce the urban heat island effect, become more resilient to changing climate conditions, and build people's connections to, understanding of, and appreciation for nature. 800.2a

800.3

Washington, DC, is one of the few cities in the United States that was originally planned and designed around the framework of a park system. The L'Enfant Plan featured broad swaths of open land to frame iconic buildings and landmarks. Wide park-like boulevards were incorporated to preserve key views and vistas. 800.3

800.34

The 1901 McMillan Plan continued this legacy, using open space to accomplish social as well as aesthetic goals. The McMillan Plan made a conscious effort to extend the park system beyond the monumental core, connect existing parks with scenic roadways, and provide for the recreation and health of a growing population. ~~The District has benefited from a legacy of far-sighted master plans that recognized the importance of parks and open space to the future of the city. The McMillan Plan of 1901 was prepared in part to beautify and better organize the District's open spaces—~~ The National Mall and Rock Creek Park that we know today are among ~~its~~ that plan's legacies. Many of the early plans prepared by the National Capital ~~Parks~~ and Planning Commission (NCPC) placed a similar emphasis on improving the ~~city's~~ District's open spaces and parkways. 8800.34

800.45

These historic plans have resulted in more than 7,800 ~~7,600~~ acres of permanent open space and parkland in Washington, DC ~~the District of Columbia~~, and one of the highest ratios of park acreage per resident in the country. Nonetheless, when Washington, DC ~~the District~~ achieved Home Rule and set about developing its first Comprehensive Plan, a ~~“park and open space element”~~ Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element was not included. This responsibility was left to the federal government, ~~primarily because~~ Today, 74 over 85 percent of Washington, DC's ~~the District's~~ parkland is still managed by the National Park Service (NPS) and is not under the District's ~~city's~~ jurisdiction.ⁱⁱⁱ The other 26 percent includes 10 percent managed by the District's Department of General Services (DGS) and DPR, and 16 percent managed by other entities, including DC Public Schools (DCPS). 800.45

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- 800.~~5~~6 Including a chapter on parks, recreation, and open space in the District ~~e~~Elements of the Comprehensive Plan is important for a number of reasons:
- First, the District itself owns ~~over~~approximately ~~9500~~ acres of parkland, and there is a need for a coordinated set of policies for ~~their~~ its management.
 - Second, access to quality parks and open space is a top priority for District residents—regardless of who owns the land. The fact that most of the ~~city's~~ District's open space is federally controlled suggests that joint policy planning for these assets is essential.
 - Third, ~~the city~~ Washington, DC is changing, which means recreational needs also are changing. Policies are needed to make sure that new park and recreational opportunities are provided and existing parks are improved to meet the needs of a changing and expanding population.
 - Fourth, parks are essential to many of the goals expressed elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan, including sustainability, resilience, improved public health, and inclusion. 800.~~5~~6

800.7 Parks are part of the foundation of what makes Washington, DC, a great place to live. They are where friends are met, and where people walk, play, and exercise. They contribute to personal wellness and the quality of the environment. They keep neighborhoods vibrant, enhance property values, and foster civic bonds. The policies in this element are aimed at sustaining parks as great public spaces while providing more equitable access to parks across the District. Achieving these outcomes requires different strategies for different neighborhoods. When investing in parks, District government and other stakeholders should consider a fair distribution, amount, and quality of parkland and facilities across the District—as well as other social factors, such as income and age, that may shape localized decisions in programming and design. 800.7

800.~~7~~8 The Comprehensive Plan is supplemented by a more detailed set of planning documents for parks and recreation that address these issues, including master plans and a collaboration with the federal government, titled CapitalSpace. These companion plans establish bold visions for advancing the District's parks and recreation goals, starting with an overarching master plan for parks (see text box entitled Parks Master Plan). In addition, the Sustainable DC Plan, completed in 2012 and updated in 2018, provides further guidance. ~~Parks Master Plan prepared by the District Department of Parks and Recreation in 2005–2006. That document should be consulted for more detailed guidance on facilities, recreational programming, and direction for specific District parks. Key data from the Parks Master Plan, including “benchmarking” data that compares the District to peer cities and the findings of a 2005 resident survey, are cited in this Element to provide context for the policies and actions.~~ 800.~~7~~8

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801 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Goal 801

801.1 The overarching goal for parks, recreation, and open space is ~~to preserve and enhance parks and open spaces within Washington, DC the District of Columbia~~ to meet active and passive recreational needs through universal access, promote health and wellness, improve environmental quality, enhance the identity and character of District neighborhoods, and provide visual beauty in all parts of Washington, DC the national capital. 801.1

802 PROS-1 Park Planning and Land Management 802

802.1 This section of the ~~e~~Element focuses on parks that are owned and operated by the District ~~of Columbia~~. Policies also express the District's perspectives on the federally-owned parks that serve ~~city~~ residents. 802.1

802.2 The District manages ~~an inventory of 375 parks and open spaces~~ 59 properties, comprising ~~approximately 950~~ 17 acres. More than two-thirds of these properties are small open space triangles formed by the intersection of diagonal avenues and the District ~~city~~ street grid. The remainder includes ~~69 recreation center grounds, 50 neighborhood parks, and four large natural areas~~. 17 regional parks, 86 neighborhood and community parks, 51 pocket parks, and eight natural areas. Figure 8.1 provides an overview of DPR-managed amenities. 802.2

802.3 For planning purposes, park activities are usually divided into two categories: active recreation and passive recreation. Active recreation is associated with sports or play activities and requires facilities such as playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, and swimming pools. Passive recreation emphasizes the open space aspect of a park or waterway and includes activities like hiking, picnicking, and kayaking. In Washington, the presence of District-owned parks and ~~n~~National ~~p~~Parks provides a unique blend of active and passive recreational opportunities. 802.3

803 The Parks Master Plan 803

803.1 In 2006, ~~the District Department of Parks and Recreation~~ DPR drafted its first Comprehensive Master Plan since its establishment in 1942. ~~Over the past 60 years, aspects of the park system have been addressed in strategic plans and other District reports, but there has been no overarching guide.~~ Building on this earlier work, DPR and the DC Office of Planning completed the Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2014 (the Parks Master Plan). 803.1

~~The Draft Parks Master Plan sets the stage for a new and exciting future for park and recreation services and facilities in Washington. It provides strategic direction to address the public's core issues and is intended to improve park management~~

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~~and operations in the city. It includes a detailed assessment of recreational needs in each of the District's 39 neighborhood clusters, along with an assessment of the facilities serving each cluster. These assessments are intended to serve as tools for prioritizing future capital improvement projects.~~

803.2 **The Parks Master Plan evaluates the existing park system, defines community priorities, and identifies a potential program of investments to make the park system more equitable and responsive to local needs. It is based on a detailed evaluation of conditions at all parks, recreation centers, and outdoor facilities; a comprehensive assessment of recreation programs; and an evaluation of service gaps based on public input, industry best practices, and objective standards. 803.2**

803.3 **The District is now at a stage where a new District-wide parks planning effort is needed to identify and prioritize the next round of major capital investments. Population and development pressures, changing recreational trends, and the opportunity, through recently passed federal legislation, to explore cooperative local management of federal parkland all present new opportunities and realities that the District faces in meeting the recreational needs of its residents. In addition, there is a need to create a District-wide plan for funding and maintaining existing, as well as new, recreation centers and park sites. For all of these reasons, DPR will begin a new parks master planning effort in 2020 that builds on the work of the 2014 plan as well as the 2010 CapitalSpace plan. 803.3**

803.4 **The Parks Master Plan addresses seven key elements of the park system:**

- **Parkland;**
- **Recreation centers;**
- **Aquatics facilities;**
- **Outdoor facilities;**
- **Programs;**
- **Bikeways and trails; and**
- **Environmental lands and natural areas. 803.4**

803.5 **For each element, the Parks Master Plan provides target benchmarks for service delivery. Specific outcomes of the Parks Master Plan include:**

- ~~New service standards for parks, recreational programs, and facilities~~
- Comprehensive information on the recreational needs of ~~DC~~ **District** residents;
- Projections of expected future needs, based on growth and demographics;
- Information on customer usage and satisfaction;
- Identification of current and potential shortfalls; **and**

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- Strategies for overcoming shortfalls, including land acquisition and programming changes.803.5

~~Draft Parks Master Plan includes seven strategic policy directives to guide park planning and programming during the coming years. These directives call for an enhanced identity for the District's park system, new programs to serve a diverse community, improvements to facility condition, better communication, more effective financial management, improved partnerships, and greater accessibility and connectivity. It also includes specific action steps and priorities for implementing these directives.~~

803.5a

Text Box: CAPRA Accreditation

In 2014, DPR became accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). This designation "recognizes and requires standards of excellence in the parks and recreation field." 803.5a

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PROS-1.1 Developing a Park Classification System 804

804.1

Most large cities in the United States have adopted classification systems to guide the management of their parks and open spaces. In fact, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) defines park classification as "the basic element of the planning function." Classification provides a basis for deciding which activities and facilities are appropriate within each park. It also provides a means of analyzing where service gaps exist and where acquisitions and capital improvements may be required. 804.1

804.2

Until 2006, the District's parks were loosely classified as "large parks," "neighborhood parks," "recreation center grounds," and "triangles." These categories are not consistent with national standards, making it difficult to evaluate the adequacy of parks or to compare the District with peer cities. ~~They are also not intuitive—the "large parks" are actually ecological areas (like Watts Branch and Kingman Island); some recreation centers have no "grounds" to speak of; and the "neighborhood parks" category includes no acreage, service area, or facility standards.~~ 804.2

804.3

The 2006 Parks Master Plan ~~has~~ recommended a new classification system to improve customer service and park management. Under this system, DPR would develop a park classification system with clear definitions of each classification based on a review of industry standards and best practices. This would allow the agency to develop more specific level of service standards based on each classification. ~~the four "Large Parks" (Oxon Run, Watts Branch, Pope Branch, and Kingman/Heritage Islands) will be re-categorized into a broader category of conservation-oriented open spaces. Recreation center grounds and neighborhood parks will be reclassified as "community" or "neighborhood" parks based on their size and amenities. The 231~~

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~~small open spaces triangles will be classified as “mini parks” and will be further distinguished based on their size and function.~~ 804.3

804.4 ~~Table~~**Figure** 8.12 summarizes ~~a the sample~~ park classification system. Map 8.1 shows the location of District-owned parks. **The small open spaces** ~~mini-parks~~ are not shown due to the map scale and **their** small size. ~~of these parks.~~ 804.4

804.5 **Figure 8.1: DPR-Managed Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Amenities**
804.5

830 acres of green space greenspace
375 parks
200 outdoor basketball courts
160 tennis courts
119 athletic and ball fields
94 playgrounds
76 recreation centers
35 gyms
34 community gardens
31 aquatic pools
25 spray parks
23 fitness centers
13 dog parks
7 senior wellness centers
7 boxing rings
5 urban farms
1 outdoor amphitheater
1 skate park

Source: DPR, 2017

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804.6

Table Figure 8.2: Sample Park Classification System 804.6

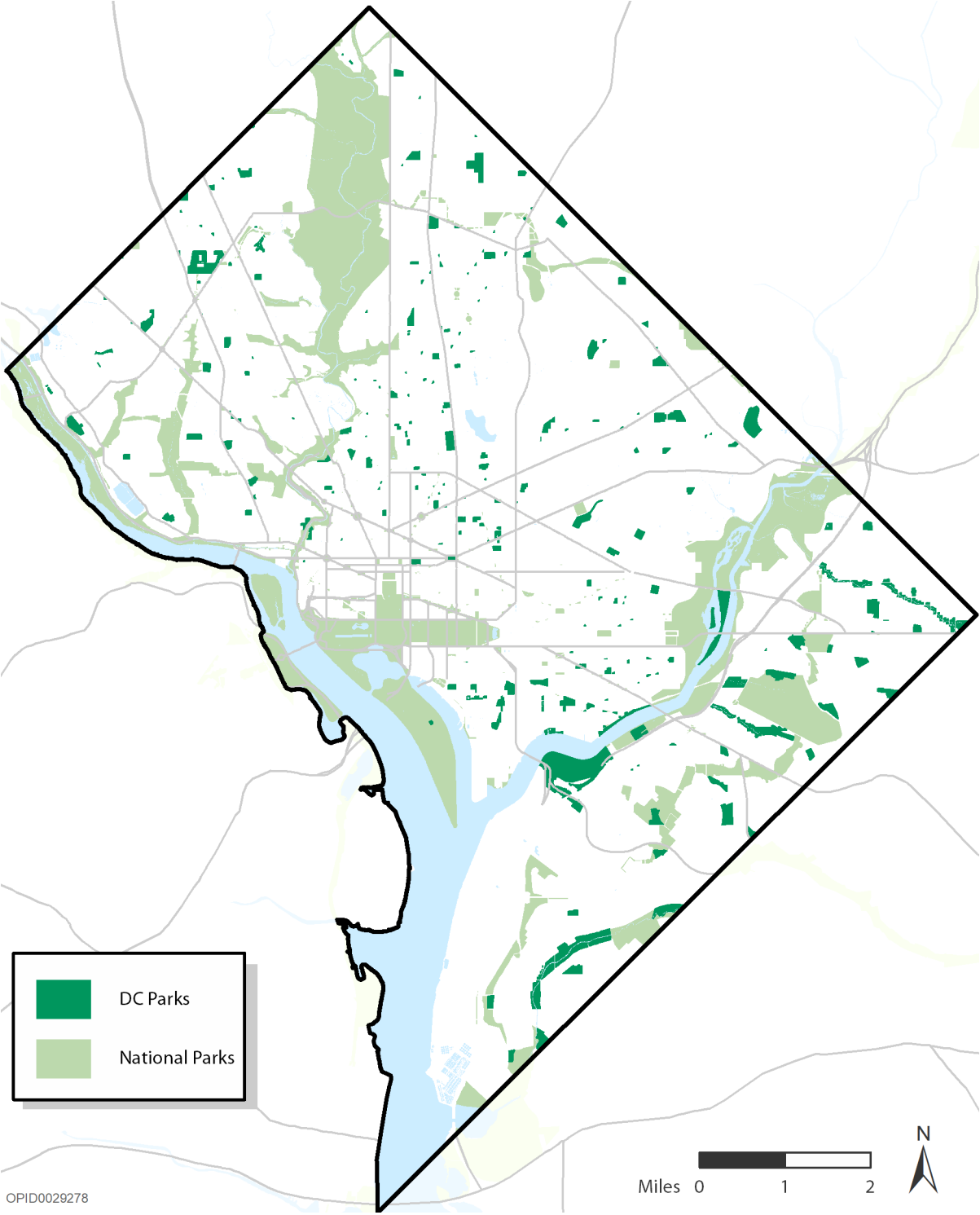
Park Type	Description	Typical Uses	Service Area*
Small Park	Pocket parks or triangles. Range from landscaped “islands” to places for socializing, playing chess, etc.	Benches, seating areas, public art, landscaping	¼-mile radius
Neighborhood	Provide informal, centrally located setting for neighborhood-based recreational amenities, possibly including recreation centers	Playgrounds, tot lots, basketball courts, open lawn areas for unstructured play, seating and picnic areas, community gardens, and interpretive or educational exhibits	½-mile radius
Community	Larger parks with more structured recreational opportunities, including recreation center buildings with a range of DPR programs	Active play-oriented outdoor facilities, such as ball fields, athletic courts, playgrounds, indoor and outdoor swim facilities, natural amenities such as trails, natural areas, and picnic grounds	<u>One- to two-</u> mile radius, with connections to bike and pedestrian trail networks
Regional	Large multiuse multi-use parks that draw users <u>District-wide</u> citywide or from beyond adjacent neighborhoods	Very large areas of open space, recreation centers, lighted athletic fields, group picnic areas, hiking, multiple activity areas	<u>District-wide</u> Citywide
Natural Resource Areas	Parks established to conserve open space and sensitive natural resources or heritage assets. If adjoined by open, level areas, then recreational fields and play areas may be appropriate.	Low-impact, passive activities, such as hiking and environmental education	N/A—not <u>demand driven</u> demand-driven
Sports Complexes	Programmed athletic fields and multiuse multi-use indoor complexes, custom designed for specific programmed uses	Track and field, natatorium, softball, soccer, tennis, basketball, volleyball, racquetball, football, boxing, martial arts	<u>District-wide</u> Citywide
Special Use	Parks dedicated to a single use, such as a zoo or amphitheater. Accommodate highly organized activities and provide economic as well as social and physical benefits. May have highly specialized management requirements.	Golf courses, aquatic or spray parks, sculpture parks, dog parks, arboretums, historic homes, amphitheaters, skate parks, climbing centers, therapeutic facilities	<u>District-wide</u> Citywide
School Parks	Public land on school property, developed with playgrounds and open fields, designed for student activities but also available for community use	Running tracks, playgrounds, athletic fields, basketball courts	½-mile to <u>two-</u> mile radius
Trails and Bikeways	Hard or soft paved paths providing linkages within or between parks, facilitating access and exploration	Paved or dirt trails, boardwalks, promenades	½ to ¼ mile to access point

* Some parks are nationally significant and serve an area larger than Washington, DC ~~the City of Washington~~.

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804.7 **Map 8.1: Location of District Parks 804.7**



Source: DC Office of Planning, 2018

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- 804.~~7~~8 An important consideration in classifying ~~the city's~~ Washington, DC's parks is ~~to recognize~~ the role that federal lands play in the overall park system (noted in Policy PROS 1.1.2 ~~below~~). In many parts of the ~~city~~, District, federal land plays a crucial role in meeting park, recreation, and open space needs. Some of ~~the city~~ Washington, DC's parks are part of a contiguous system of parks and open spaces, with different areas under different ownership and management. Such systems need to be cohesively planned and managed, and not treated as individual isolated neighborhood or community parks. 804.~~7~~8
- 804.~~8~~9 ***Policy PROS-1.1.1: Park Classification***
Adopt and maintain a classification system to guide the future use of District parks. ~~Table~~ Figure 8.~~1~~2 provides the framework for this system. Follow general management prescriptions for each type of park, as defined by ~~an~~ the official Parks Master Plan. 804.~~8~~9
- 804.~~9~~10 ***Policy PROS-1.1.2: Consideration of Federal Parkland***
Work with federal agencies to evaluate the role that federal lands play in meeting the recreational needs of District residents, particularly for regional parks and sports complexes. Because these properties are used by ~~city~~ residents, they should be considered when identifying underserved areas and assessing the need for local park improvements. 804.~~9~~10
- 804.~~10~~11 ***Policy PROS-1.1.3: Park Diversity***
Provide a diverse range of recreational experiences in parks within ~~the District of Columbia~~, Washington, DC, including a balance between passive and active recreational uses, and a mix of local-serving, region-serving ~~region-serving~~, and national recreational uses. 804.~~10~~11
- 804.10a ~~*Policy PROS-1.1.4: Small Mini-Parks*~~
~~Develop a coherent identity for mini-parks through a coordinated approach to management among the various government agencies that can define the role of mini-parks in the larger park system, help the agencies manage them more efficiently, and promote system-wide investment of resources.~~ 804.10a
- 804.~~11~~12 ***Action PROS-1.1.A: Park Classification***
Complete the classification of each of the District's ~~375~~59 properties using ~~Table~~ Figure 8.1. Identify suggested (advisory only) classifications for federal parks as part of this process. 804.~~11~~12
- 804.~~12~~13 ***Action PROS-1.1.B: Parks Master Plan***
Implement the Parks Master Plan for the District of Columbia Parks System. Update the ~~p~~Plan at least once every five years, ~~or as needed to reflect changing conditions and needs.~~ Use the Parks Master Plan as the basis for the annual Capital Improvements Program request for park and recreational facilities. 804.~~12~~13

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- 804.~~13~~14 *Action PROS-1.1.C: Master Plans for Individual Parks*
Prepare master plans for **large** individual parks **(such as regional parks) prior to major capital improvements as funding allows, and use these plans to guide capital improvement and implementation processes.** ~~implement capital improvements that are consistent with these plans.~~ 804.~~13~~14
- 804.15 *Action PROS-1.1.D: Quality of Existing Park Spaces*
Develop an enhanced maintenance and improvement schedule to upgrade the quality of passive and active parklands and outdoor facilities, to make the most of existing District parks. 804.15
- 804.15a **Text Box: New Parkland**
A 2014 DPR study estimated that 180 acres of new parkland will be needed to meet demands associated with increased population over the next 15-20 years. 804.15a
- 805 **PROS-1.2 Closing the Gaps** 805
- 805.1 At first glance, ~~the District of Columbia~~ **Washington, DC** appears to have a more than adequate supply of parkland. There are 12.~~69~~ acres of parks per 1,000 residents, compared to ~~7.99-0~~ acres per 1,000 in Baltimore, ~~6.97-2~~ acres per 1,000 in Philadelphia, ~~and 7.77-0~~ acres per 1,000 in Boston (~~Trust for Public Land, 2004 2018~~).^{iv} However, most of ~~the Washington's District's~~ parkland consists of passive federally-owned ~~n~~Natural ~~r~~Resource ~~a~~Areas. Neighborhood and community parkland is much more limited and amounts to less than one acre per 1,000 residents in many parts of the ~~District~~**city**. By contrast, suburban communities typically set standards of ~~four~~**4** or ~~five~~**5** acres of active parkland per 1,000 residents. 805.1
- 805.2 Even neighborhoods with abundant parkland may lack access to recreational amenities and facilities. Other neighborhoods have parks that are too small to meet local needs, ~~such as relief from the impacts of increasing temperatures.~~ **For example, a lack of open space and accompanying vegetation can result in heat islands that reduce local health quality. Many of** these neighborhoods include areas where significant growth is taking place, **and the increased volume** straining the ability of the facilities to meet neighborhood needs. Improved access to parks is also needed through improvements to bus service, enhanced ~~ment to~~ pedestrian and bicycle routes, ~~and as well as~~ better security. **Figure 8.3 presents recommended benchmarks for delivery of parks and recreation services.** 805.2
- 805.3 Recreational needs are also a function of demographics and density. The need for parks may be more critical in some areas of the ~~District~~**city** due to:
- Limited mobility due to low rates of auto ownership;

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- Larger numbers of children, **older adults, and/or populations with chronic disease;**
- Larger numbers of apartment dwellers living in housing without **usable** open space;
- Denser development patterns without the aesthetic amenities, **heat island mitigation, and stormwater management benefits** afforded by open space; **and**
- Larger concentrations of **"at-risk"** youth who may benefit from programmed recreational activities. 805.3

805.4 These factors suggest that special attention be given to increasing **usable** open space in the **District's** densest neighborhoods, even where parks already exist. **Special attention should also be given to connecting communities to parks where access or acreage is poor. 805.4**

805.5 **Improved data collection will allow the District and its partners to plan for a healthier and more active community. More robust data will help improve facilities usage and participation measurement, master planning, capital investment, and programming decisions. The implementation of systems to track the work of DPR—such as maps to show progress in closing level of service gaps—and visitor data to observe trends in program participation are important for prioritizing projects and improving community outcomes. 805.5**

805.6 **Figure 8.3: Benchmarks for Delivery of Park and Recreation Services 805.6**

Variable	Benchmark
Access to “Meaningful” Public Open Space (improved parks larger than 1/3 acre)	Within one-half mile of all residents
Public O pen S pace L and A rea	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 acres per 1,000 residents in each neighborhood cluster;• 2 acres per 1,000 residents in gGreater Downtown DC (e.g., the Central Employment Area)
Access to Recreation Centers	Within one mile of all residents
Access to Aquatics Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indoor pool within two miles of all residents• Outdoor pool within 1.5 miles of all residents• Splash pad within one mile of all residents
Access to Outdoor Facilities	80 percent of all DC residents will rate their access to outdoor facilities as good or excellent
Program Options	25 percent of all DC residents will participate in a DPR program, and 90 percent will rate their experience as being good or excellent

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805.~~5~~7

Policy PROS-1.2.1: Closing the Gaps

Achieve a better distribution of high-quality parks in all neighborhoods of ~~the city.~~ Washington, DC. Provide access to the natural environment or quality green space within a 10-minute walk of all residents. This will require a priority to improve or expand ~~on improving or expanding~~ parks in: ~~(a)~~

- ~~m~~A More densely populated neighborhoods with limited open space; ~~(b)~~
- ~~a~~A Areas that are more than a half~~1/2~~ mile from a neighborhood or community park (or a federal park that serves an equivalent function); ~~(c)~~
- ~~a~~A Areas where substantial new housing growth is expected, based on the forecasts of the Comprehensive Plan; ~~and (d)~~
- ~~a~~A Areas where the existing recreation centers and parks are in poor condition; and
- Areas where social and economic conditions compel a greater investment in parks to improve health, public safety, and community well-being. 805.~~5~~7

805.~~6~~8

Policy PROS-1.2.2: Improving Accessibility

Improve ~~access~~ accessibility to the major park and open space areas within ~~the city~~ Washington, DC through pedestrian safety and street crossing improvements, wayfinding signage, bike lanes and storage areas, perimeter multiuse trails within select parks, and adjustments to bus routes where appropriate. All parks should be accessible by foot, and most should be accessible by bicycle. Recognize that paved trails are accessible to wheelchair users, whereas dirt, cinder, and wood chip trails can present challenges for these users. 805.~~6~~8

805.~~7~~9

Policy PROS-1.2.3: Responding to ~~To~~ Community Change

Update and improve existing parks in response to changing demographics, cultural norms, and community needs and preferences. Parks should reflect the identity and needs of the communities they serve. Further, the parks and recreation system should evolve to offer a variety of facilities located within a reasonable distance of each resident and provide a range of programs in spaces designed to flex as residents' needs and interests change. 805.~~7~~9

~~805.9—~~

~~Policy Action PROS-1.2.4B: Public Involvement~~

~~Consult with ANCs and local community groups on park planning and development to understand and better address resident priorities. 805.9~~

805.~~8~~10

Action PROS-1.2.A: Bus Routing

Consult with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) and the DC Circulator to identify locations where additional bus stops are needed to serve ~~locate more bus stops on~~ neighborhood and community parks, particularly those with recreation centers. ~~Currently only 28 percent of the~~

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~~city's recreation centers have a bus stop; the District has set a target of increasing this percentage to 50 percent by 2014.~~ 805.8~~10~~

805.9~~11~~

Action PROS-1.2.B: Public Involvement

Consult with Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) and local community groups on park planning and development to understand and better address resident priorities. 805.9~~11~~

805.12

Action PROS-1.2.C: Park Spaces on District Properties

Encourage shared-use agreements for green spaces owned by District government and DCPS so that these areas are available and accessible to residents for recreational purposes. 805.12

805.13

Action PROS-1.2.D: Temporary Activation of Underutilized Spaces

Identify underutilized spaces that can be programmed on a seasonal and temporary basis to advance public life. Focus on commercial corridors where park space is scarce. Consult with ANCs, local community groups, and local businesses to identify locations where on-street parking spaces, empty lots, or parking lots could be seasonally repurposed for outdoor recreational use. 805.13

805.14

Action PROS-1.2.E: Open Space Plan

Evaluate the need for a District-wide open space plan focusing on improving physical access to green space and the rivers. 805.14

805.15

Action PROS-1.2.F: Promoting Access

Promote access to biking and swimming facilities and programs, with an emphasis on underserved and underrepresented groups. Explore opportunities for roving park programming to serve residents in their communities. 805.15

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PROS-1.3 Preserving~~Protecting~~ the Value of Parkland 806

806.1

A park ~~can be a symbol of~~ often reflects a neighborhood's vitality and character, ~~or an emblem of its disorganization and lack of spirit. Too~~ However, too often, ~~our~~ District parks have not been treated as the resource for revitalization and community empowerment that they should be. Some suffer from deferred maintenance, illegal dumping, and crime. ~~—o~~ Others ~~struggle to~~ face challenges accommodate~~ing~~ competing needs within limited space. Previous plans have created hundreds of small pockets of green space, contributing to the uniqueness of the District's character. Yet these spaces often pose a challenge in terms of programming and maintenance. In addition, the parks are not managed by a single government but by multiple entities. Collaboration and coordination are both necessary and often complex. ~~A lack of consistent policies on park management has led to use conflicts within some parks and in~~

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~~some cases, land use conflicts between parks and the neighborhoods around them.~~
806.1

806.2 ~~Washington's~~ **Washington, DC's** parks should be viewed as ~~a~~ limited and precious resources, no less valuable than the neighborhoods they serve. **But the purpose of park management should not be solely to preserve open space. Parks meet the recreation, education, and social needs of District residents. The tree canopy and green infrastructure parks provide can improve community resilience and sustainability through such activities as stormwater management, energy conservation, and carbon sequestration. They can support urban agriculture in areas with limited access to fresh produce. They can generate and support economic and social benefits, such as youth employment, business attraction, cultural activities, and community gathering space. The District should strive to realize these multiple and diverse benefits in the design of its parks and other public spaces.** ~~This requires that a consistent set of principles be followed for park design, programming, and planning. The following policies provide guidelines for systematically managing the District's parks to protect their long-term value. They are supplemented by more detailed park management guidelines in the Parks Master Plan.~~ 806.2

806.3 **Small open spaces (those less than one acre in size) are a significant untapped resource that can enhance the District's neighborhoods, connect residents to their community through green networks, provide additional green space, and create a sense of place. There are 1,149 of these spaces in the District. They are controlled by multiple entities of the District government: DPR, DGS, and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT). Collectively, these spaces total over 148 acres. NPS manages additional small open spaces throughout the District. These combined small open spaces are triangle parks, circles, medians, paper streets, open spaces at interchanges, and narrow strips of green space running parallel to freeways. They are part of open space systems that contribute to the park-like character of the District and its neighborhoods, creating an urban environment that is distinct to Washington, DC.** 806.3

806.~~3~~4 ***Policy PROS-1.3.1: Balancing Competing Needs***
Manage the District's parklands to ~~protect~~ **preserve** and enhance their open space character while also accommodating a range of recreational, **educational, and environmental functions** ~~activities~~. Park activities and facilities should be designed in a way that makes the best possible use of each space while minimizing conflicts between different recreational uses. 806.~~3~~4

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- 806.~~4~~5 ***Policy PROS-1.3.2: Parks and Environmental Objectives***
Use park improvements to achieve environmental objectives, such as water quality improvement, air quality improvement, ~~and~~ wildlife habitat restoration, **and tree canopy conservation and improvement.** 806.~~4~~5
- 806.~~5~~6 ***Policy PROS-1.3.3: ~~Protecting~~ Preserving ~~the~~ Small Open Spaces ~~Triangle~~ Parks***
Develop a coordinated approach for the improvement of small open spaces. Maintain the District's **small** open spaces ~~triangles~~ as neighborhood amenities supporting a range of recreational, **ecological, cultural, and commemorative uses** ~~activities~~. These **active and passive uses** ~~activities~~ should vary based on the setting of each **space** ~~triangle~~, and should range from planted "islands" to more active spaces. The **spaces** ~~triangles~~ should be designed in a way that mitigates stormwater runoff and air pollution from adjacent corridors. 806.~~5~~6
- 806.~~6~~7 ***Policy PROS-1.3.4: Conversion of Parkland/Open Space***
~~Protect~~ **Preserve** the basic function of District parks as public open spaces and prevent parkland conversion to other uses. **On select park sites with active uses, complementary uses, such as concessions or co-location, may be considered as a way to generate the revenue needed to sustain and modernize recreation facilities and further activate such spaces.** ~~In the event that there is no other viable alternative to conversion, require that an equivalent or greater area of parkland is acquired and improved in the vicinity of the impacted site.~~ 806.~~6~~7
- 806.~~7~~8 ***Policy PROS-1.3.5: Park Buildings***
~~Require a~~ Any new structure on District-owned parkland ~~to~~ **should** be sited to minimize impacts on existing recreational activities and facilities, avoid encroachment onto athletic fields, and ~~to~~ retain as much of the site as possible as **usable** ~~useable~~ open space. ~~Public buildings that do not relate to recreational needs should be discouraged from locating on city parkland, especially in areas with parkland deficiencies~~ 806.~~7~~8
- 806.~~8~~9 ***Policy PROS-1.3.6: Compatibility with Adjacent Development***
Design and manage park activities and facilities, including recreation centers, in a way that is compatible with nearby residential and commercial uses. 806.~~8~~9
- See also the Historic Preservation **Element** and the Urban Design Elements for additional policies and actions related to historic natural areas and the squares, circles, and triangles associated with the L'Enfant Plan. See the Infrastructure Element for policies on the siting of communication towers (in parks and elsewhere).*
- 806.10** ***Policy PROS-1.3.7: Health and Wellness***
Use Washington, DC's parks, open space, and recreation spaces to help meet the District's health and wellness priorities, which are linked to physical

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activity, public safety, healthy food access, psychological health, air and water quality, and social equity. 806.10

- 806.10a Text Box: Sustainable DC 2.0: One of the District’s most important resources is the health of its residents. The District consistently ranks at the top of lists of the country’s healthiest and fittest cities. Yet significant disparities in health exist along the lines of race, income, and geography. For example, residents in Ward 8 are four times as likely to have diabetes compared to residents in other wards in the District, and Black residents are almost 2.5 times more likely to have heart disease than White residents. Depending on which Ward a person lives in, life expectancy can vary by up to 10 years. Further, many District residents suffer from the negative effects of air pollution, lack safe places to exercise, and are disproportionately at risk for chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Climate impacts, like asthma and heat-related injuries, further compound these issues and often fall disproportionately and unfairly on low-income populations. 806.10a
- 806.10b Sustainable DC 2.0, Washington, DC’s plan to make the District the healthiest, greenest, and most livable city in the United States, affirms that building a culture of health means thinking beyond hospitals and clinics as the main sources of personal well-being. The opportunity to make healthy choices starts in homes, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and communities. Access to high-quality parks and open spaces and completing at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week are key components to achieving personal wellness. 806.10b
- 806.11 *Policy PROS-1.3.8: Multipurpose Infrastructure*
Design parks and recreational facilities with infrastructure to serve multiple purposes, including flood risk reduction, urban heat island mitigation, and stormwater management. 806.11
- ~~806.9~~ ~~*Action PROS-1.3.A: Open Space Zone*~~
~~Establish an Open Space zone district to cover District-owned parks, community gardens, and other lands where long-term open space preservation is desired. Develop limits on lot coverage and impervious surface coverage in this zone that recognize and protect the basic value of parkland as open space. The zoning provisions should ensure that any future construction within parks is limited to park-related uses and facilities. Completed – See Implementation Table. 806.9~~
- ~~806.10~~12 ~~*Action PROS-1.3.B.4: Transfer of Small Open Spaces Triangles to DPR*~~
Develop a strategy for small open spaces through a coordinated management approach among the various government agencies. The strategy should define the role of small open spaces in the larger park system, which will help agencies manage them more efficiently and promote system-wide investment of resources. Consider the transfer of maintenance responsibilities for small open

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~~spaces triangle parks~~ from ~~the District Department of Transportation, DDOT and NPS to the Department of Parks and Recreation DPR~~ to recognize their primary function as parkland stewards, where appropriate. 806.~~10~~12

See also the Environmental Protection Element for policies related to preventing development on land adjacent to parks, which ~~that~~ would hinder access, destroy views, or otherwise compromise the value of parkland.

806.~~11~~13 *Action PROS-1.3.~~CB~~: Site Plan Review*

~~Require that p~~Plans for the redesign of individual parks or the development of park facilities ~~are~~ should be reviewed by appropriate District agencies ~~to ensure so~~ that they advance the ~~city's~~ District's goals for better public recreation facilities, environmental protection, open space preservation, historic preservation, public safety, ~~and~~ accessibility, and resilience. 806.~~11~~13

806.14 *Action PROS-1.3.C: District-wide Ecosystem*

Support a District-wide ecosystem consortium that will work to increase wildlife habitat and connectivity, especially among parks. The consortium can collectively identify, map, and protect wildlife and natural resources so that wildlife have access to high-quality habitat throughout Washington, DC. 806.14

807 PROS-1.4 Meeting the Needs of a Growing District ~~City~~ 807

807.1 The addition of thousands of new jobs and households over the next 20 years will increase demand for programmed parks, open space, and recreational activities. Existing parks will accommodate more users, particularly in neighborhoods where high-density infill development is planned. New parks will be needed to serve new and growing communities. Given the built out ~~built-out~~ character of the District ~~city~~, finding land for such parks will be difficult and expensive. The District ~~must~~ should seize opportunities for parkland dedication on its largest redevelopment sites and take steps now to ~~ensure that~~ promote parks ~~are provided provision~~ elsewhere as ~~the~~ Washington, DC ~~city~~ grows. 807.1

807.2 A 2014 DPR study estimated that 180 new acres of parkland will be needed to meet demands associated with increased population over the next 15-20 years. Additional recreation facilities and programs also are needed to close gaps in underserved neighborhoods. Many residents are more than a half-mile from a usable park or open space or live in a neighborhood where park acreage is low. ~~Presently, the District Department of Parks and Recreation operates approximately 3.5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 households in the city. If 55,000 households are added in the next 20 years, almost 200 acres of new parkland would be needed to sustain this ratio. The 100 acres of~~ New parks planned at Buzzard Point, the n ~~the n~~ Near Southeast, Poplar Point, Hill East, and elsewhere along the Anacostia River will meet some of this demand. Additional

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parkland will be needed to serve growth and development in the north central, ~~and~~ northeastern, **and southeastern** parts of the **District** ~~city~~, where a substantial amount of additional housing is planned in an area with a dearth of public parks. Substantial areas for new parks should also be designated in the reuse plans for any large federal sites that are transferred to the District or used for private development in the future. 807.2

807.3 Creating new parks in built-up neighborhoods will be more challenging. There is competing pressure to use public land for other purposes, particularly revenue-generating uses like housing and office development, **which tend to make** potential new park sites more expensive. The ~~city~~ **District** does not have a dedicated funding source for parkland acquisition (such as an impact fee) and capital improvement funds are typically used for new facilities rather than ~~to~~ **buy the acquire** vacant land. Acquisition may occur through a variety of means, such as donations and grants, **payment in lieu of taxes, tax increment financing, and public-private partnerships.** Open space may also be set aside within new projects through development agreements and ~~P~~lanned ~~U~~nited ~~D~~evelopment (**PUD**) amenity packages. Such open space should be usable and accessible and address open space needs of the area, **including rooftops and courtyards.** **Business improvement districts (BIDs) also have a potential role to play. In 2012, the North of Massachusetts Avenue (NoMa) BID formed the NoMa Parks Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to securing additional park space in the neighborhood.** 807.3

807.4 New and improved parks along the waterfront have contributed to the vitality of the District in three powerful ways: making the waterfront universally accessible, add economic value to new development as a neighborhood amenity through recreation and programming, and provide environmental resilience to mitigate flooding and the impacts of climate change. Canal Park, Yards Park, Diamond Teague Park, and the Wharf Park are linked to new developments and provide neighborhood amenities for existing and new waterfront residents, workers, and visitors. Additionally, long-standing federal park and open space assets—from Langston Golf Course, to the National Arboretum, to Anacostia Park—are experiencing reinvestment, including plans for stronger connections to adjacent communities. 807.4

807.5 The increase in the District's population means that there is a greater demand for commemorative parks under federal jurisdiction, such as Franklin Park, to serve residents. Additionally, the federal government has struggled to provide adequate funding to plan, develop, and maintain the range of parks and open space that it operates. Federal partnerships with local agencies and organizations—such as DPR, BIDs, and nonprofit groups—are key to developing strategies that improve the character and function of these parks, provide new visitor amenities, and better support

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their neighborhoods while still preserving commemorative and historic resources within the parks. 807.5

807.6 ***Policy PROS-1.4.1: Park Planning***
Prioritize the creation of parks and recreation spaces through neighborhood planning and development review processes, particularly in areas where residents are not within a 10-minute walk of sufficient park space. 807.6

807.47 ***Policy PROS-1.4.12: Park Acquisition***
Acquire and improve additional parkland to meet the recreational needs of existing and future residents. This should occur both through the expansion of existing parks and the development of new parks. **807.47**

807.58 ***Policy PROS-1.4.23: Acquisition Methods***
Use a variety of methods to acquire and improve parkland, including easements, donations, land purchases, **strategic property transfers, long-term land leases,** and park set-asides on new development sites. Recognize the impacts of new development on the need for additional park and recreational facilities, and mitigate impacts through dedication of parkland or in-lieu payments. **807.58**

807.69 ***Policy PROS-1.4.34: Parks on Large Sites***
Include new neighborhood and/or community parks on large sites that are redeveloped for housing and other uses that generate a demand for recreational services. The potential for such parks to enhance the connectivity of parks and open spaces throughout the ~~city~~ **District** should be an important planning and design consideration, particularly where multiple large adjacent sites are being redeveloped. **807.69**

807.710 ***Policy PROS-1.4.45: Parks on Surplus Land***
Acquire and convert abandoned or tax delinquent land, surplus rail or road **rights-of-way**~~rights of way~~, and other land not in productive use into recreational use where feasible and appropriate, particularly in parts of ~~the city~~ **Washington, DC,** that lack adequate access to parkland. **Balance the need for additional open space with other District priorities, such as affordable housing. 807.710**

807.811 ***Policy PROS-1.4.56: Park Amenities on NPS Land***
Where consistent with other policies in the Comprehensive Plan and NPS plans, and where supported by nearby neighborhoods and needs assessments, encourage federal government projects that would provide new recreational amenities—, such as soccer fields, picnic areas, and trails—**that increase equitable District resident access to** ~~on~~-national parkland. **807.811**

807.912 ***Policy PROS-1.4.67: Parks in Employment Growth Areas***
Provide new parks and open spaces in areas of expected employment growth. Small pocket parks, plazas, and other open spaces should be created in the

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vicinity of the ~~New York Avenue~~ NoMa-Gallaudet U Metro sStation, ~~the Southeast Federal Center~~, Buzzard Point, the east end of ~~D~~downtown/Mount Vernon Triangle, and the ~~South Capitol Street Corridor~~ Near Northeast neighborhood to provide visual relief and space for ~~outdoor seating~~ active and passive recreation. 807.~~9~~12

807.~~10~~13 *Action PROS-1.4.A: New Parkland Dedication or Park Impact Fee*
Study a requirement for a dedication of new parkland—or a park impact fee in lieu of new parkland creation—for new development or redevelopment based on the size, use, and density of the new development. ~~the feasibility (including potential fiscal and economic effects) of adopting a park impact fee that would require residential developers to help cover the cost of parkland acquisition and improvement. Such a fee would be based on a standard amount per dwelling unit or square foot, with the proceeds used to acquire or improve nearby parkland.~~ 807.~~10~~13

~~807.11~~ *Action PROS-1.4.B: Mixed Use Zones*
~~As part of the review of the city's zoning regulations, revise the provisions for mixed use zones to consider requirements for useable recreation space or payments in lieu to meet recreational needs.~~ Completed – See Implementation Table. ~~807.11~~

See also the Educational Facilities Element for policies on the use of school recreational facilities and lands.

808 PROS-2 Park and Recreational Facilities 808

808.1 While the previous section of this ~~e~~Element focused on park planning, this section focuses specifically on park facilities. 808.1

808.2 The District currently operates ~~69~~ 76 recreation centers, with a combined total of approximately one million square feet of floor space. ~~four specialty recreational facilities, 74 playgrounds, 99 athletic fields, 138 tennis courts, 31 swimming pools, and hundreds of basketball courts.~~ It also operates over 50 aquatic facilities comprised of 11 indoor pools, 18 outdoor pools, four children's pools, and 20 splash pads. The range of facilities have grown to include 34 community gardens, five skate parks, and over a dozen dog parks. There are more than 340 fields and courts, accommodating field sports, tennis, basketball, and other athletic activities. These facilities are used to provide recreational services to residents in all parts of the District ~~city~~. ~~Department of Parks and Recreation~~ DPR activities range from aquatics, quilting, and environmental education to martial arts, personalized weight training, and even poetry slams. Many of the programs are targeted toward specific age groups, such as ~~seniors~~ older adults and teens. Others are designed for persons with ~~special needs~~ disabilities or for families. 808.2

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808.3 Demand for recreational programs—and the facilities ~~that~~ to accommodate them—is expected to grow in the future as population grows. Demand will also be affected by cultural changes, new technology, sports and entertainment trends, and demographic shifts. The growth of the youth and senior older adult populations, in particular, will influence ~~future~~ recreational needs in the ~~city~~ District over the next 20 years. The text box ~~to the right,~~ The District Speaks Out on Parks, provides an indication of current recreational habits and trends in ~~the city~~ Washington, DC, based on a 200513 resident survey. 808.3

808.43a Text Box: The District Speaks Out on Parks ~~The 2005 Parks Survey~~ 808.4 ~~One of the outcomes of the city's 2006 Parks Master Plan was a resident survey that assessed the demand for recreational facilities in the city. A total of 421 responses were tabulated, including representative samples from each of the city's eight wards. Key findings were:~~

- ~~• 61 percent of the respondents had visited a DPR park in the last 12 months; 46 percent had visited a recreation center.~~
- ~~• 37 percent of the respondents rated the condition of DPR parks as good or excellent; 46 percent rated them as fair or poor.~~
- ~~• Half of the respondents (50%) indicated they use the city's National Parks for recreation.~~
- ~~• 17 percent of the respondents spent more than 8 hours a week on recreation activities.~~
- ~~• The most popular recreational activities were walking/jogging (43%), playground use (23%), swimming (24%), and picnicking (23%).~~
- ~~• About 56 percent of respondents indicated they walked to their local park; however, even more respondents said they drove (68%).~~
- ~~• Only about 16 percent of the respondents indicated they had participated in a DPR program during the last 12 months. The reasons residents gave for not participating included lack of information (36%), lack of time (18%), and concerns about personal safety (16%).~~
- ~~• The highest priority expressed by respondents was the maintenance of existing parks,~~
- ~~• Fields, and playgrounds. Maintenance of recreation centers was also a top priority. Lower priorities were the development of new play fields, new recreation centers, and small neighborhood parks.~~

The Parks Master Plan process conducted in 2013-2014 engaged the community in a discussion about park needs in Washington, DC. Public input was solicited through stakeholder interviews, an advisory committee, staff workshops, focus groups, an online engagement tool, a recreation center survey, and a statistically valid mail-in survey. Major findings of the survey included:

- Seventy-one percent of the respondents had visited a DPR park in the last 12 months. Of this total, 77 percent rated the park as good or excellent. Another 20 percent rated the park as fair, and only 23 percent rated the park as poor.

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- Twenty-eight percent of the respondents indicated they visited an indoor recreation center at least once a week.
- Eighteen percent of the respondents had participated in a DPR recreation program in the last 12 months. Of this total, 82 percent rated the program as good or excellent.
- The most frequently mentioned reasons for not using parks and recreation centers more often were lack of time (47 percent), lack of program awareness (32 percent), and absence of desired amenities (12 percent).
- The facilities in greatest demand were trails (66 percent), small neighborhood parks (66 percent), indoor pools (59 percent), large community parks (57 percent), indoor exercise and fitness facilities (55 percent), picnic areas (54 percent), and outdoor pools (53 percent).
- The programs in greatest demand were community special events (59 percent), adult fitness and wellness (52 percent), water fitness (40 percent), adult leisure learning (40 percent), and nature programs (40 percent). 808.3a

808.4

The needs assessment during the 2013-2014 master planning process determined that:

- The District's strengths include a relatively large number of recreation centers and amenities, including some with state-of-the-art spaces. However, some facilities are underused because they are outdated or not well maintained.
- There is a major need to improve and maintain existing facilities. Deferred maintenance is a problem at many recreation centers. Improvements need to be addressed in a prioritized, equitable, and efficient method.
- There is a perception of inequity in parks and recreation services. This is partially due to the gap between high-quality new or recently modernized facilities and those that are older. Some parts of the District have better access to facilities than others.
- The existing neighborhood-based model of providing services may not be sustainable and requires too many facilities to be built, operated, and staffed. Although consolidation would result in a smaller number of facilities, it may translate into higher levels of service, since these facilities could reach larger populations and be operated more efficiently. 808.4

809

PROS-2.1 Assessing Recreational Facilities 809

809.1

The 2014 Parks Master Plan identified three primary facility types in the District's parks:

- Recreation centers, which provide space for the delivery of indoor recreation services and support space for outdoor activities;

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- Aquatic facilities, including pools and splash pads; and
- Outdoor facilities, including courts, playgrounds, fields, and similar park features. 809.1

809.2 The text and policies below provide general direction on how these facilities can be managed to meet future needs. In general, residents overwhelmingly favor enhancing existing assets to building new facilities. This focus should continue, particularly in areas experiencing subpar levels of service today. 809.2

809.3 The District has one of the highest ratios of recreation centers to residents in the country. The District’s ratio is substantially higher than ratios for the largest East Coast cities and several major West Coast cities. However, this benchmark does not consider the condition or size of the center, or the accessibility of recreational services to residents. Most of the District’s recreation centers meet basic expectations, but some need modernization. DPR and DGS are actively working to improve the quality and size of outdated centers. 809.3

809.4 As Map 8.2 indicates, there are still many parts of the District that may require additional recreation center space. Service gaps appear in Near Southeast, the far western and far northern parts of the District, and downtown. 809.4

809.5 DPR’s design guidelines identify four recreation center prototypes: neighborhood, community, District, and specialty. They are distinguished by their size, amenities, and service area. Criteria are provided for the functional relationship of interior spaces for each center type. There are also guidelines to recognize the historic significance of older centers and protect their historical integrity. 809.5

~~809.1 Benchmarks provide a means of measuring the adequacy of the District’s recreational facilities based on “peer cities” and national standards. For example, Figure 8.1 indicates that the District has a higher number of recreation centers per 1,000 residents than Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, or Philadelphia. Similar analysis conducted during the Parks Master Plan found that the District ranked close to its “peer” cities in its number of swimming pools, was above average in tennis courts, and was well below average in athletic fields. These are citywide benchmarks, however. They also pertain to the quantity of facilities, rather to facility condition or quality. 809.1~~

~~809.2 Figure 8.1: Recreation Centers per 1,000 Residents 809.2~~

~~809.3 Map 8.2 (page 8-15) shows the location of recreation center buildings in the city. The Map also shows a one-half mile radius—or about a ten-minute walk—around~~

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~~each center. Service gaps appear in neighborhoods like Fairlawn, Deanwood, Forest Hills, and Shepherd Park. Similar analyses for recreational facilities indicate a need for more athletic fields in the central part of the city, swimming pools in Upper Northwest, and tennis courts in the Mid-City and Capitol Hill areas. 809.3~~

~~809.4 The policies below provide general direction on how existing facility gaps might be closed and how new facilities can be provided to meet future needs. Again, the Parks Master Plan provides more detail on these issues and should be consulted for additional guidance and programmatic recommendations. 809.4~~

809.6 The District has one of the highest number of aquatics facilities per capita in the country. However, sometimes these facilities are not in the best location or best condition, and sometimes they are not large enough to meet demand. To promote equitable access to and excellence in aquatics, continued investment in pools and other facilities is needed. Evaluations of potential new aquatic facilities, including those that can generate revenue and draw visitors from other jurisdictions, may be considered in the future. Other water-oriented activities, such as river canoeing, kayaking, and fishing, also will be supported through recreational programs. 809.6

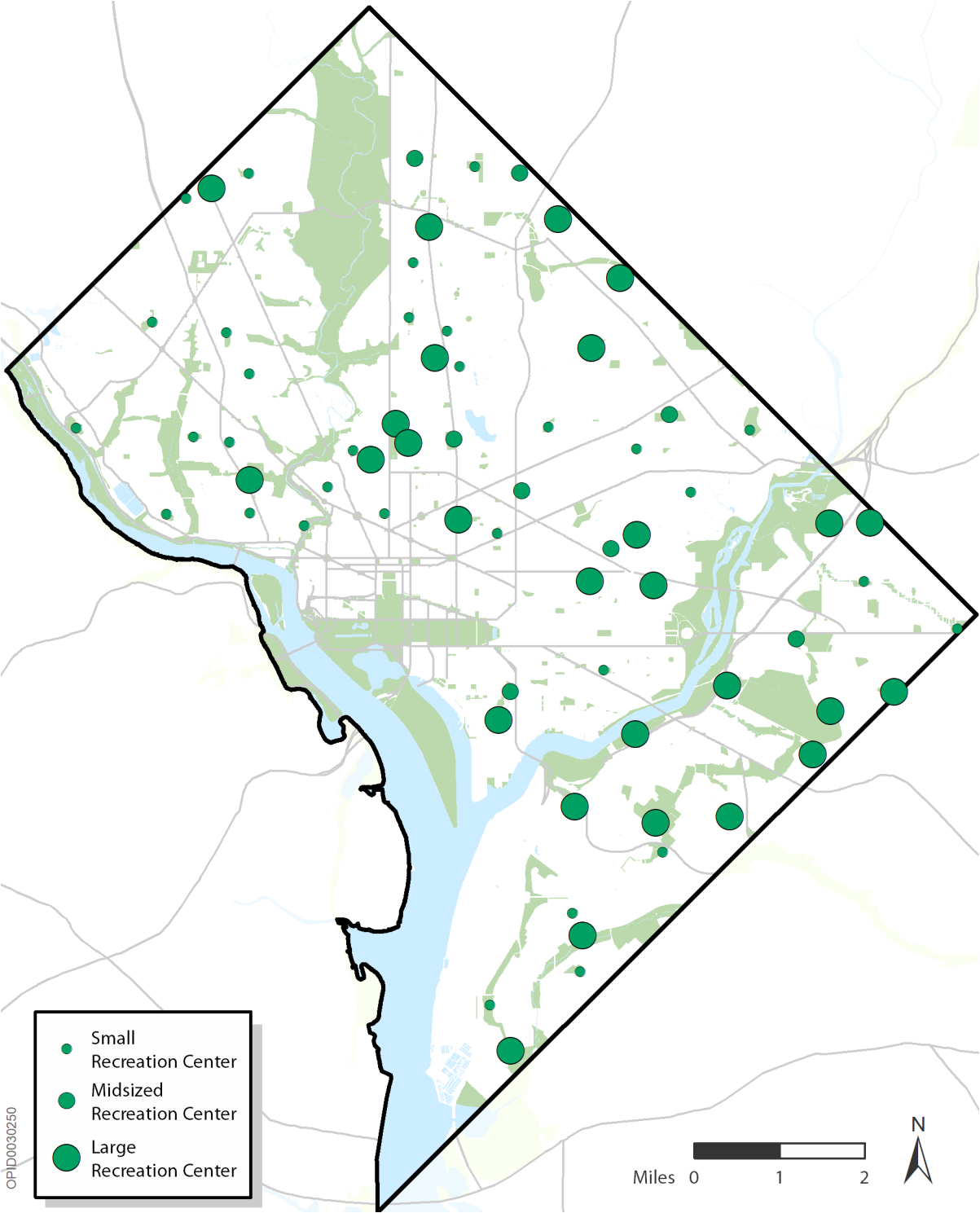
809.7 Probably the most familiar function of a neighborhood or community park is to provide space for active outdoor recreation. District parks support hundreds of facilities, including softball and baseball fields, football and soccer fields, basketball courts, tennis courts, dog parks, and skate parks. In addition, an unprecedented number of playgrounds were renovated in 2013 and 2014, drawing thousands of children and other users to new equipment across the District. The District continues to work toward securing more outdoor facilities and modernizing existing facilities so they can be operated and maintained more efficiently. In some instances, this may require partnering with agencies such as DCPS and DDOT to creatively accommodate facilities on school grounds or in transportation rights-of-way. Given the limitations of the District's compact geographic area and the varied amounts of space for outdoor facilities, recreation can become a component of new urban infrastructure projects in a number of settings. 809.7

809.58 *Policy PROS-2.1.1: Recreational Facility Development*
Improve the physical and psychological health of District residents by providing a variety of recreational and athletic facilities, including playing fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, basketball courts, trails and paths, **art studio and exhibition spaces, boating facilities, docks,** and open areas for other sports activities. 809.58

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809.9 Map 8.2: Recreation Center Buildings ~~and Potential Service Area Gaps~~ **809.62**



Source: DC Office of Planning, 2018

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- 809.~~7~~10 ***Policy PROS-2.1.2: Use of ~~Benchmarks and~~ Service Standards***
Develop recreational facilities in an orderly way by using ~~benchmarks and~~ service standards and design guidelines that help identify local needs. Further, consistently apply the new classification system for recreation centers included in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Direct investment in new facilities to the areas with the greatest unmet needs and areas where additional demand is expected in the future. 809.~~7~~10
- 809.~~8~~11 ***Policy PROS-2.1.3: Quality and Compatible Design***
~~Require a~~ All park improvements ~~to~~ should be of high design and construction quality, sensitive to the natural environment, respectful of historic structures and important cultural landscapes, sensitive to the needs of people of all ages and abilities, and compatible with surrounding land uses. 809.~~8~~11
- 809.~~9~~12 ***Policy PROS-2.1.4: Responding to Local Preferences***
Provide amenities and facilities in District parks that are responsive to the preferences and needs of the neighborhoods around the parks. Park planning should recognize that there are different leisure time interests in different parts of ~~the city~~ Washington, DC. To better understand these differences, the community ~~must~~ should be involved in key planning and design decisions. 809.~~9~~12
- 809.~~10~~13 ***Policy PROS-2.1.5: Adapting to Changing Needs***
Allow the development of flexible facilities ~~which that~~ respond to changing preferences and community needs in appropriate District parks, including ~~fenced dog exercise areas (dog parks),~~ skate parks, tot lots, and water spray parks. 809.~~10~~13
- 809.14 ***Policy PROS-2.1.6: Nature-Based Design***
New recreational facilities should incorporate nature-based design principles that value residents' innate connection to nature and allow abundant opportunities to be outside and to enjoy the multisensory aspects of nature. Nature-based elements can include a visual connection with nature, the presence of water, the use of natural materials, and incorporation of dynamic and diffuse light. 809.14
- 809.15 ***Policy PROS-2.1.7: Alternatives to New Facilities***
Identify opportunities to meet outdoor recreational needs through existing public or private facilities, as an alternative to building new facilities. 809.15
- 809.16 ***Policy PROS-2.1.8: Project Development Process***
Maintain a well-defined and transparent project development process so that future park projects meet resident needs and achieve context-sensitive design solutions. Recreational needs should be confirmed through area plans, neighborhood plans, and plans for individual parks. 809.16

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- 809.17** **Policy PROS-2.1.9: Use of Emerging Technologies**
Support the use of emerging technologies, such as tech lounges and e-sports, to create interactive gathering spaces for residents, particularly youth and older adults. 809.17
- 809.~~17~~18** *Action PROS-2.1.A: Capital Improvements*
Regularly identify and update the cost of improvements needed to meet service delivery standards, including those for recreation centers, aquatic facilities, and outdoor facilities. Provide systematic and continuing funds for park improvements through the annual Capital Improvement Program, **with investments prioritized**. ~~Use the Parks Master Plan as a guide for directing funds to~~ **for** the facilities and communities that are most in need. 809.~~17~~**18**
- 809.~~12~~19** *Action PROS-2.1.B: Needs Assessments and Demographic Analysis*
Conduct periodic needs assessments, surveys, and demographic studies to better understand the current preferences and future needs of District residents ~~with respect to~~ **regarding** parks and recreation. 809.~~12~~**19**
- 809.20** *Action PROS 2.1.C: Parks Restroom Inventory*
Conduct an assessment of the existing parks restroom inventory, considering park size and usage to determine the needs for additional public restrooms. 809.20
- See also the Community Services and Facilities Element for policies on the co-location of recreational uses with other public facilities.*
- 809.21** *Action PROS-2.1.D: Level-of-Service and Classification Systems*
Evaluate existing level-of-service standards by type of facility and amenity, and where deemed necessary, develop facility-specific classification systems. 809.21
- 809.22** *Action PROS-2.1.E: Improvement of Outdoor Recreational Facilities*
Systematically evaluate existing outdoor recreational facilities based on the Parks Master Plan design guidelines. Implement plans to eliminate deficiencies and close gaps through capital improvements. Typical capital projects might include turf restoration, addition of lighting and seating at sports fields, playground renovation, and resurfacing of basketball and tennis courts. 809.22
- 810** **PROS-2.2 Providing Quality Service to All Residents 810**
- 810.1** Maintaining a quality park system requires a high level of facility maintenance, modernization, and repair. **A 2009 assessment of 72 DPR facilities found that 10 were in poor condition, 11 were in fair condition, and 51 were in good condition. A supplemental assessment of 56 recreation centers was done by**

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DGS in 2013. It found 11 facilities in poor condition, 17 in fair condition, and 28 in good condition. ~~An analysis prepared as part of the Parks Master Plan estimated that more than half of the District's recreation centers are in fair to poor condition and should be considered for replacement by 2014. This includes the 25 recreation centers in the city that are more than 50 years old.~~ 810.1

810.2 On a per capita basis, the District spends less on park **operations and maintenance** than peer cities like **Minneapolis, Portland, and San Francisco.** ~~Boston, Baltimore, Chicago, and Minneapolis.~~ Since 2003, however, ~~its~~ **the District's** annual expenditures on park capital improvements have been higher than **expenditures in** these cities. New facilities ~~like Emery, Sherwood, and Turkey Thicket~~ are replacing aging buildings and providing attractive new community centers. With more capital construction planned in the coming years, the District will need to dedicate additional funds to cover the higher expenses of operating and maintaining these facilities. 810.2

810.3 Similar efforts will be needed to address a wide variety of park planning issues, including the personal safety of park visitors, provisions for ~~at-risk~~ youth and residents with ~~special-needs~~ **disabilities**, staffing needs, and the coordination of service delivery with other agencies. A steady, reliable stream of funds will be essential to keep ~~our~~ parks safe and attractive, and to respond to future needs. 810.3

810.4 **Programming is one of the core elements of recreational service delivery. DPR delivers over 400 programs a year at its facilities. Recent data indicates that fewer than 20 percent of DC residents participate in these programs. Detailed data on demographics, resident preferences, and user satisfaction can help create more responsive programming. There are also opportunities for better marketing and programming for targeted audiences like youth and older adults. In some cases, service delivery by other agencies or nonprofits may be the most effective option.** 810.4

810.~~4~~**5** Looking ahead, new funding sources—such as public-private partnerships, grants, and concessions—may be necessary. A commitment to future funding should recognize the many tangible and intangible benefits that ~~Washington's~~ **the District's** parks provide to ~~our~~ neighborhoods. 810.~~4~~**5**

810.~~5~~**6** ***Policy PROS-2.2.1: Maintenance and Renovation***
Provide for the continuing maintenance, renovation, and upgrading of the District's parks and recreational facilities to prevent their deterioration ~~and ensure~~ **so** that they continue to meet community needs. **Prioritize the asset management of existing facilities during the capital improvement process.** 810.~~5~~**6**

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- 810.~~6~~7 ***Policy PROS-2.2.2: Park Safety and Security***
Design parks, trails, and recreational facilities to improve ~~the public~~ safety of visitors and staff. Avoid creating hidden and ~~difficult-to-access~~ difficult to access areas, where security problems or vandalism could result. Lighting, fencing, building materials, and other design components should be selected to enhance the safety of park users. Park lighting ~~shall~~ should be compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods. 810.~~6~~7
- 810.~~7~~8 ***Policy PROS-2.2.3: Program Diversity***
Provide diverse recreational activities to promote healthy living for persons of all ages and cultural backgrounds. Such activities should be distributed equitably in all parts of the ~~District~~ city. Coordinate activities and offerings with other service providers, including DCPS ~~Public Schools~~ and community-based organizations such as wellness centers for older persons, to maximize the effectiveness of service delivery and minimize redundancy. 810.~~7~~8
- 810.9 ***Policy PROS-2.2.4: Data-Driven Programming***
Collect and analyze data on recreational program participation, and use this data to shape decisions on future programs and operations. Programs should reflect local and national trends in recreation and regular surveys of District residents, with a focus on meeting the needs of underserved populations.
810.9
- 810.~~8~~10 ***Policy PROS-2.2.~~4~~5: Youth Recreational Services***
Provide recreational services that are particularly responsive to the special needs of the District's youth, using recreation and athletics to promote ~~self-esteem~~ self-esteem, responsibility, and leadership skills among ~~DC teens~~ youth. 810.~~8~~10
- 810.~~9~~11 ***Policy PROS-2.2.~~5~~6: Special Needs***
Increase efforts to meet the needs of ~~special~~ underserved population groups, particularly older residents and persons with disabilities. Provide "barrier free" access by modifying existing facilities to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities ~~the disabled~~ and modifying existing indoor and outdoor facilities and parks to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities. Explore the use of alternative participation styles and formats in the program curriculum so that activities can be easily adjusted to allow persons with disabilities and residents needing additional accommodations to participate. 810.~~9~~11
- 810.12 ***Policy PROS-2.2.7: Physical Activity in Everyday Spaces***
Prioritize community-driven strategies to support physical activity in non-traditional, everyday spaces across the District. Childhood play is essential to physical, cognitive, creative, social, and emotional development. However, many children face barriers to play, such as a perceived or actual lack of safe spaces. District government and its partners should provide additional

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opportunities for play in everyday locations where kids and families already spend time, including bus stops, grocery stores, and sidewalks. 810.912

810.1013

Policy PROS-2.2.-68: New Funding Sources

Seek out and pursue new forms of **local**, federal, ~~nonprofit~~**non-profit**, and private financial support to acquire, develop, and operate the District's park and recreational facilities. **Streamline the process for accepting private donations of parks-related goods, services, and facilities.** 810.1013

For more information, see PROS-4.1 on public-private partnerships.

810.11

~~*Policy PROS-2.2.7: Public-Private Partnerships for Recreation*~~

~~Consider joint public-private financing to develop or rehabilitate recreational facilities that cannot be provided by District government alone due to budgetary or fiscal constraints. 810.11~~

810.1214

Policy PROS-2.2.-89: Park Stewardship

Encourage volunteer assistance and stewardship in the maintenance of the District's parks, particularly the triangle parks along major thoroughfares. Local community organizations should be encouraged to donate goods, services, and time to help in the oversight and upkeep of such spaces. **Stewardship should be viewed as a way to increase environmental awareness, reduce maintenance costs, and build civic pride in parks.** 810.1214

810.13

~~*Policy PROS-2.2.9: User Fees*~~

~~Establish user fees and charges for recreational programs as needed to partially recover the cost of providing recreation services to the public. Use graduated fee schedules where feasible to make allowances for residents with limited incomes. 810.13~~

810.1415

Policy PROS-2.2.10: Fiscal Impact of Park Improvements

Evaluate proposed park facilities to determine their ability to generate revenue and help recover operational and maintenance costs. When developing new facilities, assess the projected operation and maintenance costs prior to requesting capital funding approval. 810.1415

810.1516

Action PROS-2.2.A: Facility Assessments

Conduct regular facility condition and utilization studies, and use this data to determine if there is a need for improvement, reconstruction, closure, or expansion. A comprehensive facility condition assessment should be performed for each recreation center at least once every five years. 810.1516

810.1617

Action PROS-2.2.B: Maintenance Standards

Create official maintenance standards **based on industry best practices, such as Sustainable SITES Initiative (SITES) or an equivalent system,** to improve the

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effectiveness of current maintenance and service levels for recreational buildings, facilities, and landscaping. ~~Require~~ **Both maintenance contractors and the District should adhere** ~~adherence~~ to these standards ~~by maintenance contractors, as well as the District itself.~~ 810.16~~17~~

810.17~~18~~ *Action PROS-2.2.C: Adopt-a-Park*
Continue to E~~ncourage~~ community groups, businesses, and others to participate in the District's Adopt-a-Park/Adopt-a-Playground program and publicize the program through signs, advertisements, websites, and other media. **Support Friends of Parks groups in stewarding, advocating, and hosting fundraising events for park sites to help maintain grounds and buildings and assist in the planning process.** 810.17~~18~~

810.18~~19~~ *Action PROS-2.2.D: Data Tracking*
Establish a system to maintain and regularly update data and maps on parks, recreational facilities, and programming offered by DPR and affiliated providers to measure improvements in levels of service and document achievements. ~~Implement computer tracking of data on facility use, costs, and revenues to make more informed decisions and to guide policies on fees, fee waivers, scheduling, and other aspects of facility programming.~~ 810.18~~19~~

810.19~~20~~ *Action PROS-2.2.E: Marketing and Branding*
Develop a marketing plan to increase public awareness of programs ~~Implement a unified marketing strategy to raise awareness of the variety of the District's recreational program offerings and to more firmly establish an identity for Washington, DC, parks the District of Columbia Parks. This strategy should use advertisements, web-based information and promotions, radio and television, branding, and other means to raise the profile of District parks.~~ 810.19~~20~~

See also policies in the Environmental Protection Element about “green” maintenance and green building practices, including requirements that future recreation centers meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver standards.

810.20~~21~~ *Action PROS-2.2.F: Integration of Federal and District Athletic Fields*
Better integrate federal and District athletic fields under the jurisdictions of NPS, DPR, and DCPS. 810.20~~21~~

810.22 *Action PROS-2.2.G: Design Standards*
Create District-wide parks and recreation facility design standards for outdoor facilities. Design parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities to reflect the preferences and culture of the local population, to accommodate a range of age groups and abilities, and to improve the safety of visitors and staff. When renovating playgrounds and parks, design new infrastructure for

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active recreation, including workout equipment, for all ages and abilities.
810.22

810.23 *Action PROS-2.2.H: Hospital and Clinic Partnerships*
Explore partnerships with hospitals and clinics to increase the number of
doctors prescribing parks and recreational activities to patients of every age.
810.23

810.24 *Action PROS-2.2.I: Performance Monitoring*
Provide the necessary hardware and software to track customer use and
evaluations, determine gaps in programming and facilities, and identify
opportunities to improve the overall performance of the parks and recreation
system. 810.24

810.25 *Action PROS-2.2.J: Recreation Program Action Plan*
Develop a recreation program action plan that elevates, standardizes, and
expands the quality of DPR program offerings. The plan should help DPR to
prioritize program investments while promoting broader goals of health,
fitness, artistic expression, and community building. 810.25

810.26 *Action PROS-2.2.K: Public-Private Partnerships*
When using a public-private partnership model to fund park acquisitions or
improvements, incorporate programming and maintenance plans. 810.26

810.27 *Action PROS-2.2.L: New Kiosk Development*
Amend the zoning regulations to allow temporary (and permanent) kiosks at
residentially zoned parks, where appropriate. Kiosks would be owned by the
District and revenue from the kiosks would be used to support park
maintenance and operations. 810.27

811 PROS-3 Open Space Networks 811

811.1 ~~The District of Columbia~~ Washington, DC, is characterized by four outstanding
and distinct networks of open space:

- The Monumental Core, including the National Mall and adjacent areas in East and West Potomac Parks;
- Rock Creek Park and the linear parks along its tributary streams, extending from the Potomac River to the Maryland border;
- The Civil War Defenses of Washington, otherwise known as the Fort Circle Parks, forming a "ring" of open space approximately five miles out from the ~~city~~ center of the District; and
- The Anacostia and Potomac parklands, including linear parks along tributary streams. 811.1

811.2 Each of these areas is profiled in more detail below. Together, they comprise

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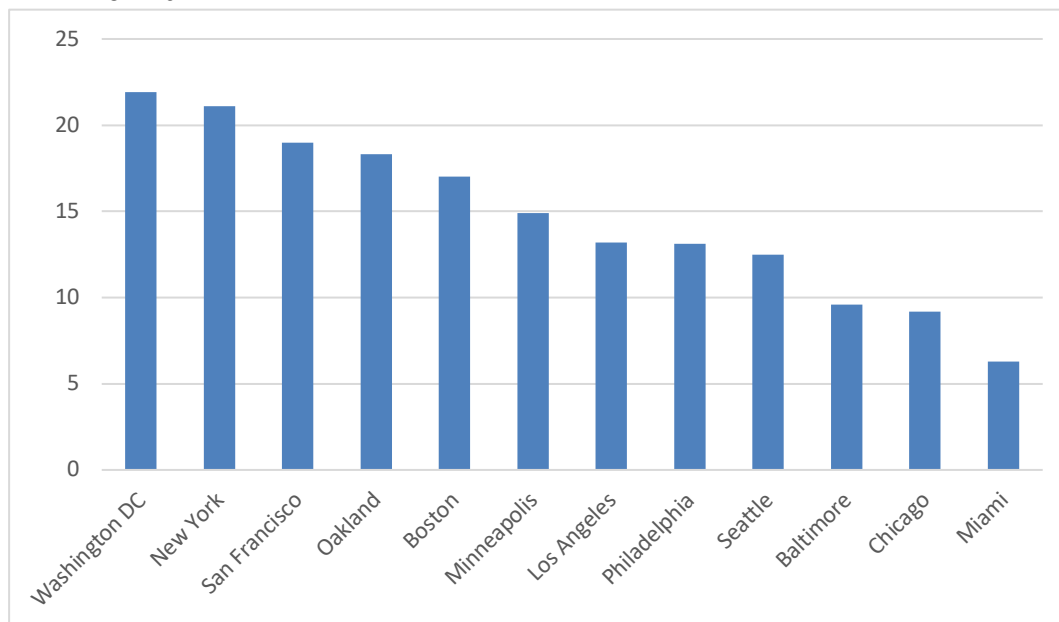
6,700 acres of parkland, or about 18 percent of the ~~city's~~**District's** land area. Because almost all of this land is under the control of ~~the National Park Service~~**NPS**, the policies presented here are intended to express the District's aspirations for ~~their~~ **the land's** ~~long-term~~ **long-term** management. They are statements of the District's values and priorities, to be consulted by our federal partners as they plan and manage these important properties. 811.2

811.3 In addition to the four open space networks described above, there are other important ~~"chains"~~ of interconnected open space across the ~~city~~**District**. Among the most significant is the corridor of District, federal, and institutional lands extending from McMillan Reservoir on the south to Fort Totten on the north. 811.3

811.4 This section of the Comprehensive Plan includes a special focus on park and open space planning for Washington, **DC**'s waterfronts. The need to improve connectivity between ~~our~~ open spaces through trails and greenways also is addressed. Policies on these topics are supplemented in Section PROS-4.0 with ~~a discussion~~ **information** on ~~"functional"~~ open spaces that may augment this network **and** further ~~contributing~~**contribute** to community needs, environmental quality, and economic value. 811.4

811.5 Figure 8.4 compares the total parkland acreage within ~~the District of Columbia~~**Washington, DC**, to other high-density U.S. cities, using data from a recent analysis by the Trust for Public Land. 811.5

811.6 Figure 8.4: Parkland Open Space, **Washington, DC** Compared to Other Cities 811.6



Source: Trust for Public Land, 2016

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812 PROS-3.1 Sustaining and Enhancing the Federal Open Space Systems 812

812.1 ~~The National Mall and Environs~~

Although ~~the District of Columbia~~ **Washington, DC**, does not have jurisdiction over the National Mall and the adjoining open spaces in East and West Potomac Parks, these are arguably the most visible and high-profile parklands in the **District** ~~city~~. They project the image of Washington, **DC**, to the world and attract millions of visitors each year. The future of the landscaped glades between the U.S. Capitol and the Potomac River is the focus of national debate, as the need for new monuments and memorials is balanced against the need to retain the Mall's historic form, sight lines, and open quality. **Under statehood, the National Mall and environs would be preserved as the core of the federal district. In addition, the prospect of sea level rise threatens the continued viability of recreational uses at East Potomac Park and Hains Point.** The Mall serves **local, national, and international communities.** ~~both the local community and the national community~~ It is integral to Washington, **DC**'s history. **The National Mall should remain an inclusive space that allows users to recognize history while balancing the need to draw visitors to the District.** The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) has prepared several important plans on these issues, including the Legacy Plan and the **Memorials and Museums** ~~and Memorials~~ Master Plan. Both plans seek to preserve the historic proportions of the Mall, recognize its multiple functions as a passive and active open space, and expand the open space network to new areas along South Capitol Street and the Anacostia River. 812.1

812.2 Several planning initiatives for the National Mall have been completed ~~or are underway~~. In 2000, ~~the National Park Service~~ **NPS** completed a Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park. The approved plan provides the management framework and flexibility needed to manage and ~~protect~~ **preserve** the site for the presidency, and the public. **In 2001, NCPC released the Memorials and Museums Master Plan, which identifies 100 potential locations for memorials and museums, and provides general guidelines for their development.** In addition, in 2004, the nonprofit organization National **Mall** Coalition ~~to Save Our Mall~~ launched the National Mall Third Century Initiative (3C Initiative). The mission of the 3C Initiative is to renew the vitality of the Mall through creative public use, wise stewardship for the next century, and appropriate expansion. ~~The National Park Service, as managers of the National Mall, will be preparing a plan for its future over the next three years.~~ The U.S. Commission of Fine Arts (**CFA**) is also involved in planning and design decisions on the Mall. 812.2

~~812.3 While all of these initiatives are critical, they have yet to provide a shared long-range vision for the multiple open spaces of the monumental core. An overall~~

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~~coordinated plan that looks at the future of this open space network, addressing issues such as transportation and Mall expansion, is still needed. 812.3~~

812.43

~~Rock Creek Park~~

Rock Creek Park is the largest contiguous open space within the District, encompassing over 2,000 acres along the Rock Creek Valley and its tributary streams. The park's scenic landscapes provide a respite from the cityscape of Washington, DC. Each year, more than two million people visit the park to hike, picnic, play, and enjoy its rugged beauty. More than 12 million people a year use the park roads for commuting or scenic driving. In 2005, ~~the National Park Service~~ NPS completed a General Management Plan (GMP) for the largest unit of Rock Creek Park, providing guidance on how to best ~~protect~~ preserve natural resources and manage visitor services. The goals of the GMP are to preserve and perpetuate the ecology of the Rock Creek Valley, ~~protect~~ preserve archaeological and historic resources, provide for education and exploration, and create opportunities for recreation that are compatible with the park's natural and cultural setting. The GMP itself includes management "prescriptions" that will guide future land use decisions and issues regarding road closures and traffic management. 812.43

812.54

~~The Fort Circle Parks~~

At the start of the Civil War in 1861, a series of fortifications was built around Washington, DC, to protect the nation's capital from a Confederate invasion. Among the fortifications were Fort Stevens, —site of an 1864 battle; Fort Reno, —highest point in the District ~~of Columbia~~; and Fort Dupont, the largest park east of the Anacostia River in Ward 7 or 8. After the Civil War, most of the 68 forts and 93 batteries were dismantled, and the land was returned to its pre-war owners. Before they disappeared completely, a number of fort sites were purchased by the federal government and developed as parkland. An envisioned Fort Circle greenbelt featured prominently in the McMillan Plan of 1901, and with the advent of the automobile, the greenbelt was proposed ~~for as~~ a 23-mile circumferential parkway around the growing ~~city~~ District (the Fort Drive). 812.54

812.65

~~The National Park Service~~ NPS prepared a ~~General Management Plan (GMP)~~ GMP for the Fort Circle Parks in 2003. The GMP's primary objectives include ~~protection~~ preservation of ecological and historical values ~~while and accommodation of~~ accommodating local recreational interests. The GMP seeks to remedy issues such as the deteriorated state of the parks' historical earthworks, concerns about visitor safety, and the lack of visitor services and interpretive facilities. Among the planned improvements are a new hiking trail linking the forts through existing parkland, new recreational features, coordinated signage, and new public access points. 812.65

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- 812.~~7~~6 ~~The Potomac and Anacostia Parklands~~
The ~~two~~ **Potomac and Anacostia** rivers and their associated tributaries, such as Watts Branch and Pope Branch, provide an important link in the District's open space network. They provide protection for sensitive natural habitat, scenic beauty, and **water-oriented** ~~water-oriented~~ recreation for District residents and visitors. Washington, **DC**'s waterfront open spaces ~~actually~~ encompass an area larger than all of Rock Creek Park. ~~However, a lack of continuity between the waterfront parks hinders their ability to function as an open space "network". Many of the parks are disconnected or are cut off from one another by highways, railroads, industry, and other barriers. As part of the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Plan, a riverwalk linking the individual Anacostia Parks into a system has been proposed and partially funded. There is also pending federal legislation that would transfer key waterfront open space lands from the federal to District governments.~~ 812.~~7~~6
- 812.7 **Investments in infrastructure have helped deliver a connected waterfront, so that the Anacostia River no longer divides neighborhoods. State-of-the-art multimodal projects are enhancing mobility and public access to and along the waterfront, such as the nearly 20-mile Anacostia Riverwalk Trail and the local 11th Street Bridge, which now serves pedestrians and cyclists. When constructed, the planned Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge will continue this momentum. Further, the planned pedestrian and cyclist bridge spanning the Anacostia River, as well as additional new miles of bike paths linking underserved communities, will continue this momentum.** 812.7
- 812.8 **In addition, the Anacostia waterfront has emerged as a cultural center complementing the Mall with cultural venues, sports arenas, and museums. These amenities enliven the waterfront's shores with millions of annual visitors and reinforce the District's unique cultural heritage. There are also new developments and neighborhoods that serve as destinations themselves, such as the Wharf, and that are changing the image of the District and its relationship with the water through unique public spaces and programming. From Nationals Park and Audi Field to new museums, music venues, future monuments, and the planned 11th Street Bridge Park, the Anacostia waterfront is adding to the cultural energy and dynamism of Washington, DC. Despite these successes, significant environmental, urban design, and infrastructure challenges remain.** 812.8
- See the Environmental Protection, Urban Design, and Infrastructure elements for more information about these issues.***
- 812.~~8~~9 Policies for the waterfront are presented in the Section **PROS**-3.2 of this ~~e~~**E**lement. 812.~~8~~9

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- 812.10** ***Policy PROS-3.1.1: District Open Space Networks***
Coordinate with NPS and other relevant organizations to restore the environmental health of the District's open space networks, including tree cover and habitat, and to help more residents experience these areas through nature programs and trails. 812.10
- 812.911** ***Policy PROS-3.1.12: Monumental Core***
Preserve the integrity of the National Mall open space, and advocate for federal plans and programs that ~~protect this area from~~**avoid** inappropriate or excessive development. 812.911
- 812.1012** ***Policy PROS-3.1.23: East and West Potomac Parks***
Work with the federal government to ~~protect~~**preserve** and enhance the great open spaces of the ~~M~~**monumental** ~~C~~**core** beyond the National Mall, such as Hains Point and the Tidal Basin parklands. **In efforts** ~~C~~**consistent** with the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, support the use of these areas for outdoor cultural events and celebrations, and for recreational activities and amenities that serve District residents and visitors. Planning for these areas should provide opportunities to expand the National Mall and better integrate East Potomac Park with the Southwest Waterfront across the Washington Channel. **Planning for these areas should also seek to mitigate sea level** ~~sea level~~**rise through nature-based design solutions where possible. 812.1012**
- 812.1113** ***Policy PROS-3.1.34: Rock Creek Park***
~~Ensure that t~~The District's land use and transportation decisions **should** support the conservation of Rock Creek Park as a national scenic resource. Actively participate in discussions about the management of park resources—, including roadways **and**, recreational facilities—, and environmental quality. 812.1113
- 812.1214** ***Policy PROS-3.1.45: Tributary Parks***
Maintain the scenic open space qualities and ecology of the ~~city's~~ **District's** stream valley parks, including tributaries to the Potomac and Anacostia ~~Rivers~~ **rivers and** ~~as well as~~ tributaries to Rock Creek. **Create and maintain hiking and walking paths along tributary streams as appropriate to preserve habitats, minimize erosion, and preserve trees. Ensure that d** ~~Development~~ adjacent to stream valley corridor parks ~~does~~**should** not compromise visual and ecological values and access to natural and forested areas. 812.1214
- ~~See the Environmental Protection Element for additional policies on stream protection~~**preservation.***
- 812.1315** ***Policy PROS-3.1.56: Fort Circle Parks***
~~Protect~~**Preserve** and enhance the Fort Circle Parks as an integrated network of permanent open spaces that connect neighborhoods, provide scenic beauty and historic interest, and offer a variety of recreational activities. Recognize these

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parks as an important ~~city~~**District** and national resource. Prevent District and federal actions that would harm historic and ecological resources in the Fort Circle Parks, and strongly support actions that would improve their maintenance, connectivity, visibility, accessibility, and safety. 812.~~13~~**15**

- 812.~~14~~**16** ***Policy PROS-3.1.67: Compatibility with Parklands***
Maintain and design public and private development adjacent to the edges of open spaces and parks to be compatible with these parklands and improve park access and safety. 812.~~14~~**16**
- 812.~~15~~**17** ***Action PROS-3.1.A: Participation in Federal Planning Park Efforts***
Support and participate in **NPS National Park Service and NCPC efforts to update to plan for parks and open spaces in, and adjacent to, the Monumental Core.** ~~the 1976 Master Plan for the National Mall, NCPC's upcoming National Capital Framework Plan, and other federal initiatives to plan for the Mall in the 21st Century.~~ Encourage ~~citizen~~**resident** participation in these efforts. 812.~~15~~**17**
- 812.~~16~~**18** ***Action PROS-3.1.B: Monument and Memorial Siting***
Actively participate with the appropriate federal agencies, commissions, and others in discussions and decisions on the siting of new monuments, memorials, and other commemorative works on open spaces within ~~the District of Columbia~~**Washington, DC.** 812.~~16~~**18**
- 812.~~17~~**19** ***Action PROS-3.1.C: Implementation of General Management Plans***
Support federal efforts to implement the Comprehensive Design Plan for the White House and President's Park and the ~~General Management Plans~~**GMPs** for Rock Creek Park and the Fort Circle Parks ~~(Civil War Defenses of Washington).~~ 812.~~17~~**19**
- 812.~~18~~**20** ***Action PROS-3.1.D: Fort Circle Park Trail***
Use land acquisition and/or easements to complete the Fort Circle Park **Hiker-Biker** Trail; and to provide additional Fort Circle Park signage and historic markers. 812.~~18~~**20**
- 812.~~19~~**21** ***Action PROS-3.1.E: Fort Circle Partnerships***
Actively participate in interjurisdictional and public-private partnerships to ~~protect~~**preserve**, enhance, restore, and complete the Fort Circle Parks. 812.~~19~~**21**
- 812.~~20~~**22** ***Action PROS-3.1.F: Park Land Transfers***
In cooperation with appropriate federal agencies, identify park resources in federal ownership that could potentially be transferred to the District **for conservation or recreational purposes only, such as Franklin Park, the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Stadium (RFK Stadium), and Langston Golf Course.** 812.~~20~~**22**

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813 PROS-3.2 Reclaiming the Waterfront 813

813.1 The contrast between the ~~city's~~**District's** two waterfronts—the Potomac and the Anacostia—has been well documented. Virtually the entire Potomac shoreline north of Hains Point is publicly accessible, with such amenities as the **Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal towpath, Georgetown Waterfront Park, Thompson's Boathouse Boat Center,** and Theodore Roosevelt Island. The shoreline affords stunning views of the ~~city's~~**District's** monuments and picturesque vistas across the river to Virginia. On the other hand, much of the 22 miles of shoreline along the Anacostia River, **while inaccessible, is natural and relatively undisturbed. is underutilized. unattractive, and inaccessible**~~In 2003, the Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan set a visionary and ambitious agenda for the revitalization of the Anacostia waterfront as a world-class destination and the center of 21st-century Washington, DC. The Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) set in motion a transformation that includes new mixed-income neighborhoods, environmental restoration, transportation infrastructure, enhanced public access, new connected parks, and cultural destinations. Fifteen years after the AWI Plan, the turnaround of the Anacostia waterfront is a national model for urban rivers in terms of environmental restoration, public access, economic development, and inclusive growth.~~ 813.1

813.2 Along the Potomac, the District's priority is conserving the federal parklands, retaining public access, and improving access where it does not exist today. Along the Anacostia, **the District has created a system of interconnected and continuous waterfront parks that establish access to the river for recreation, from signature locations like Yards Park to improved facilities like Kenilworth Recreation Center, all joined by the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail.** ~~However, despite these significant achievements, several recreational and open space improvements have yet to be realized. the priority is to link more than a dozen disconnected open spaces to create a unified system of first-class parks, and to connect these parks to the neighborhoods they adjoin. Figure Map 8.3 provides an overview of completed and ongoing projects along park recommendations for~~ the Anacostia waterfront. The Area Elements should be consulted for additional detail. 813.2

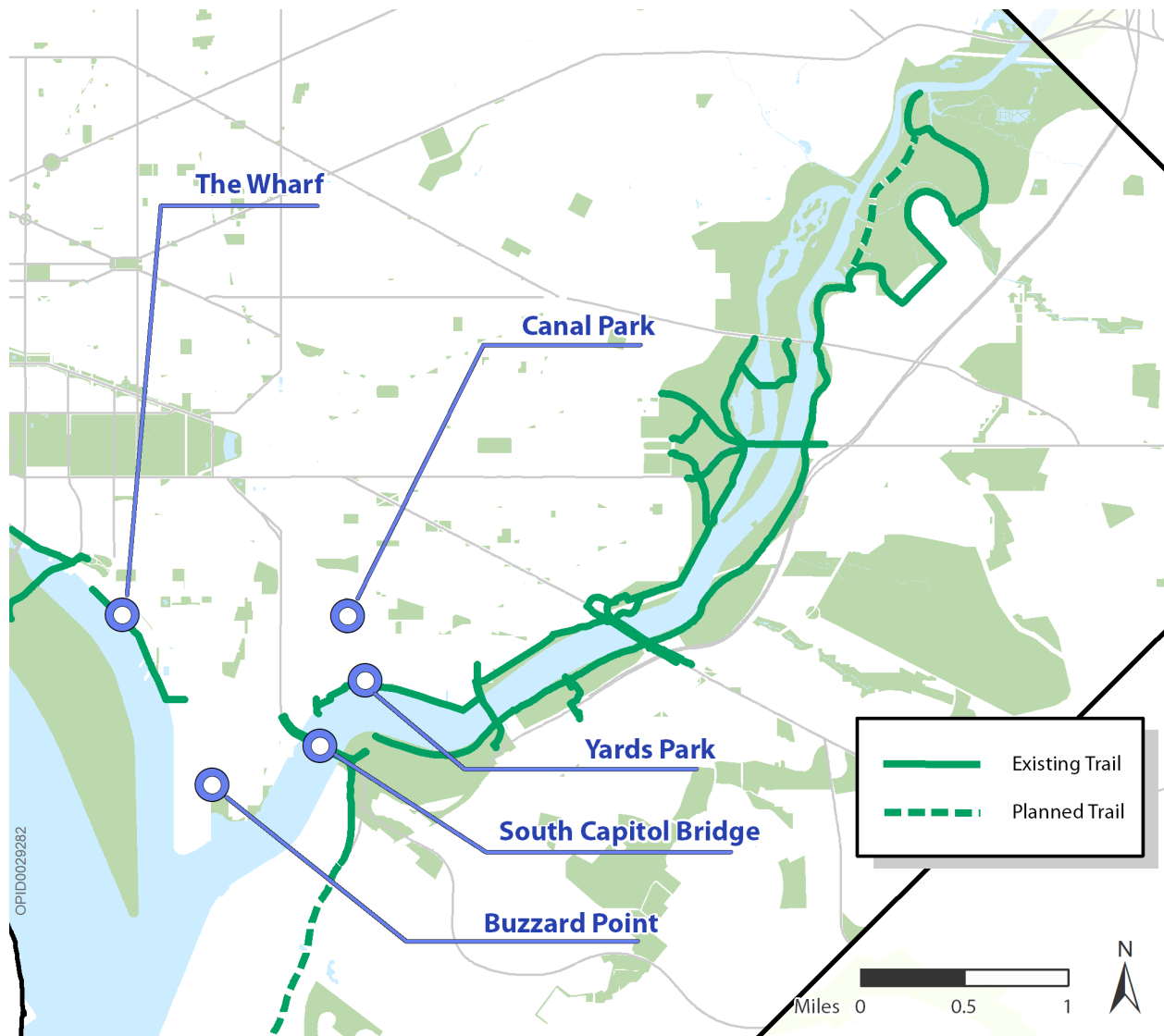
813.3 ***Policy PROS-3.2.1: ~~Protecting~~ Preserving Waterfront Open Space***
Recognize the importance of ~~the city's~~ **Washington, DC's** waterfronts for recreation, public access, ecological protection, and scenic beauty. 813.3

813.4 ***Policy PROS-3.2.2: Connecting Neighborhoods to the Rivers***
Develop open space linkages between the Anacostia and Potomac ~~Rivers~~ **Rivers** and adjacent neighborhoods using stream tributaries such as Watts Branch and Pope Branch as a framework for linear parks between the shoreline and nearby residential areas. 813.4

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813.5 Map 8.3: Overview of Completed and Ongoing Projects along the Anacostia Waterfront ~~Proposed Anacostia Waterfront Park Recommendations~~ 813.5



Source: DC Office of Planning, 2018

813.6 Policy PROS-3.2.3: ~~Linkages Between the~~ Linking Residents to Waterfront Park Spaces

Establish stronger **multimodal** linkages between the waterfront and adjacent upland neighborhoods, including Deanwood, Mayfair, Kenilworth-Parkside, River Terrace, Fairlawn, Twining, Kenilworth, Historic Anacostia, Carver-Langston, Kingman Park, Hill East, Capitol Hill, Barney Circle, ~~and~~ Southwest, and Buzzard Point. Maximize public access to the waterfront from these areas

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through the development of a **continued** riverwalk and shoreline trail, **natural shorelines**, **green infrastructure along streets**, improved public transportation, redesigned bridges and freeways, **additional pedestrian access routes**, and the extension of neighborhood streets and avenues to the water's edge. 813.6

813.7 ***Policy PROS-3.2.4: Waterfront Visibility and Accessibility***
Improve access to the shoreline parks from across ~~the city,~~ **Washington, DC**, and reduce barriers to waterfront access created by railroads, freeways, and ~~non-~~ **water-dependent** ~~non-water dependent~~ industrial uses. However, no freeway or highway removal shall be undertaken prior to the completion of an adequate and feasible alternative traffic plan that has been approved by the District government. 813.7

813.8 ***Policy PROS-3.2.5: Water-Oriented Recreation***
Provide for a variety of water-oriented activities—~~including~~ **kayaking, and paddle-boarding**—on the District's rivers. Recognize both the Anacostia and Potomac ~~Rivers~~ **rivers** as vital aquatic resources than can accommodate kayaking, canoeing, sculling, fishing, and other forms of water-oriented recreation. 813.8

813.9 ***Policy PROS-3.2.6: River Facilities***
Coordinate with federal and private partners to create a network of facilities along the Anacostia and Potomac rivers that provide water access, recreational equipment, educational space, and other amenities. These amenities should be equitably distributed along the rivers and easily accessible from nearby neighborhoods. 813.9

813.~~9~~**10** ***Policy PROS-3.2.~~6~~**7**: Shoreline Access***
On waterfront development sites under District jurisdiction, ~~require~~ public access to the shoreline **should be provided** unless precluded by safety or security considerations. **Incorporate natural shorelines where appropriate.** 813.~~9~~**10**

813.~~10~~**11** ***Policy PROS-3.2.~~7~~**8**: Waterfront Park Design***
~~Require the design and planning of w~~ Waterfront parks **should be designed and planned** to maximize the scenic and recreational value of the rivers. ~~Activities~~ **Features** such as parking lots and park maintenance facilities should be located away from the water's edge, and environmentally sensitive resources should be protected. 813.~~10~~**11**

813.~~11~~**12** ***Policy PROS-3.2.~~8~~**9**: Upper Potomac Waterfront***
Partner with ~~the National Park Service~~ **NPS** and other federal agencies to conserve open space along the Potomac waterfront and to ~~protect~~ **preserve** the wooded and scenic qualities of the Potomac Palisades and adjacent islands and shoreline, ~~including the creation of the Georgetown Waterfront Park.~~ **Support efforts by NPS and partners to restore, reimagine, and revitalize the C&O**

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Canal National Historic Park. 813.~~11~~12

813.~~12~~13

Policy PROS-3.2.910: Lower Potomac Waterfront

Support additional public access to the Potomac waterfront from the mouth of the Anacostia River southward. While general access is currently restricted due to existing uses (such as that by Bolling Air Force Base), the District should identify long-term opportunities for shoreline open space and recreation, in the event that federal needs and use of this land change. 813.~~12~~13

See also the Urban Design Element for additional policies and actions related to shoreline development and aesthetics and the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Element for additional ~~discussion of~~ information about the planned shoreline parks.

813.~~13~~14

Action PROS-3.2.A: Anacostia River Park Improvements

Work collaboratively with the federal government, the private sector, and community and nonprofit groups, ~~and the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation~~ to implement the open space improvement plans of the ~~Anacostia Waterfront Initiative~~ AWI. Planned improvements include:

- A major destination park at Poplar Point;
- Restored natural areas at Kingman and Heritage ~~i~~Islands;
- New parks, including recreational fields, around RFK ~~s~~Stadium;
- Continuous bicycle and pedestrian trails along the waterfront and new pedestrian crossings on the upper reaches of the river;
- New neighborhood parks and athletic fields within redeveloping areas along the waterfront, including the Southwest ~~W~~waterfront, Buzzard Point, Near Southeast, and Hill East; and
- Enhancements to the existing waterfront parks. 813.~~13~~14

For more details on these planned parks, see the Lower Anacostia Waterfront/Near Southwest Area Element and the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative Framework Plan.

813.~~14~~15

Action PROS-3.2.B: Signage and Branding

Work with ~~the National Park Service~~ NPS to develop and implement a consistent system of signage and markers for the Anacostia and Potomac waterfronts.

813.~~14~~15

813.~~15~~16

Action PROS-3.2.C: Anacostia River Boating

Develop additional marine facilities, including rowing centers, appropriately scaled~~appropriately-sealed~~ boathouses, boat slips, and piers along the banks of the Anacostia River as recommended in the ~~AWI~~ Anacostia Waterfront Framework Plan. All new marinas should become Clean Marina Partners. Implement boating access improvements utilizing the Boating Access grants from the

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wildlife & Sport Fish Restoration Program.
813.~~15~~16

813.17 *Action PROS-3.2.D: Anacostia Riverwalk*
Construct new sections of the Anacostia Riverwalk according to the Buzzard Point Vision Framework's riverwalk design guidelines. Work with Fort McNair to extend the Anacostia Riverwalk along the Washington Channel and design it to include co-benefits, such as enhanced security and flood protection for the base and ecological restoration features, thereby completing a key piece of the District-wide riverwalk system. 813.17

814 PROS-3.3 Other Significant Open Space Networks 814

814.1 The District's formal open space networks are complemented by several smaller open space systems. These networks may be lesser known due to fragmented ownership and multiple functions, but they are no less important—particularly to the communities they serve. 814.1

814.2 A unique open space network comprised primarily of major federal facilities, cemeteries, and institutional uses is located just north of ~~the city's~~ **Washington, DC's** geographic center, in an area otherwise lacking in public parkland. The network includes McMillan Reservoir, the Armed Forces Retirement Home, Rock Creek ~~Church~~ Cemetery, **Battleground** National Cemetery, and Glenwood, Prospect Hill, and St. Mary's ~~cemeteries~~ **Cemeteries**. This area was already established as a major recreational ground for Washington, **DC**, in the 19th century. Its role ~~as such~~ was confirmed by the 1901 McMillan Plan, which recognized the dual ~~function~~ **purposes** of these lands as functional facilities and passive open spaces. While public access to many of these properties is restricted today, their presence as an open space corridor is plainly visible on aerial photos of the **District**~~city~~. 814.2

See the Upper Northeast Element for more information on these properties.

814.3 Several sites ~~along~~ **in the path of the** McMillan to Fort Totten open space network are currently under consideration for development. As detailed plans are developed for these sites, the District ~~must~~ **should** take an active role in conserving the connected open space network as ~~an~~ **a** historic, ecological, aesthetic, and recreational resource. 814.3

814.4 Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s Highway Plan for the District created two kinds of boulevards and parkways that are part of a larger park and open space system. Some broad boulevards—including Nebraska Avenue, South Dakota Avenue, and Minnesota Avenue—connect parks to the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. Winding parkways along ridges, in valleys, or other roadways leading into large parks include Reno Road, Arkansas Avenue,

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and Alabama Avenue. These boulevards and parkways, enhanced by circle and triangle parks, should be preserved and maintained as elements of the larger park and open space system. Additionally, although parkways were not intended or designed to be major transportation arteries, they also currently function as primary transportation routes. 814.4

814.45 Continued enhancement and preservation of open space networks in other parts of the District ~~city is~~ are also important ~~called for~~. These networks include the forested greenbelt along Oxon Run, the woodlands and wetlands around Oxon Cove (extending south into Maryland), and the wooded areas extending from Westmoreland Circle to the Potomac River (including Dalecarlia Reservoir). 814.45

814.56 *Policy PROS-3.3.1: North--Central Open Space Network*
~~Protect~~ Preserve and enhance the historic open space network extending from McMillan Reservoir to Fort Totten. As ~~future~~ land use changes in this area ~~take place~~, an integrated system of permanent open spaces and improved parks should be maintained or created. 814.56

814.67 *Policy PROS-3.3.2: Other Open Space Networks*
Recognize the recreational, scenic, environmental, and historic value of other interconnected or linear open spaces in the District ~~city~~, including Oxon Run, Oxon Cove, and the Dalecarlia Reservoir area. 814.67

814.6a8 *Policy PROS-3.3.3: Small Park and ~~Mini-Park~~ Open Space Cluster Improvements*
Prioritize improvements of small open spaces ~~park and mini-park clusters~~ in areas with limited access to parks and open space, and a growing population. Apply common themes, such as sustainability, placemaking ~~place-making~~, or connectivity to plan, enhance, and maintain the small parks as a system. 814.6a8

See the Environment Protection Element for more information on the use of pollinator gardens in small parks and open spaces.

814.89 *Policy PROS-3.3.4: Small Parks Database*
Develop a shared database of small parks, as defined by the CapitalSpace ~~Capital Space~~ Plan, to inform coordination efforts between agencies and with the public. The database should include ~~including~~ data on ownership, size, location, function, level of use, historic or cultural value, commemorative elements, programs, and condition. Assess existing agency jurisdiction for certain small parks ~~to ensure so~~ that each parcel is managed effectively to meet District and/or federal objectives, and clarify the responsibilities of the managing agencies. 814.89

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814.10 *Policy PROS-3.3.5: Boulevards and Parkways*
Balance the transportation needs and safety standards of modern roadways with the preservation of resources and of scenic parkway goals to minimize impacts on viewsheds and natural and cultural resources that comprise the parkway landscape. 814.10

See the Urban Design Element for additional information on parkways.

814.11 *Policy PROS-3.3.6: Enlivening Cemeteries*
Explore using cemeteries for passive open space. Collaborate with cemetery administrators to reconnect the burial grounds to the surrounding neighborhoods for greater public access. 814.11

814.712 *Action PROS-3.3.A: Creating “Washington, DC’s Central Park”*
Work with the federal government, ~~NCRC~~, and institutional and open space landowners to create a linear system of parks and open space extending from Bryant Street on the south to Fort Totten on the north. This system should be created from existing large publicly-owned-and institutional tracts, as well as adjacent triangle parks, cemeteries, and rights-of-way. 814.712

See the Rock Creek East and Mid-City ~~Area-Elements~~ for additional information on this network.

814.13 *Action PROS-3.3.B: Boulevards and Parkways*
Preserve and maintain boulevards and parkways as elements of the larger park and open space system. Proposed improvements and maintenance projects along trails and parkways should minimize impacts on viewsheds and are sensitive to the natural and historic qualities that make them significant. 814.13

815 **PROS-3.4 Connecting the ~~City~~-District Through Trails 815**

815.1 Trails and linear parks are an important part of the open space network. They link the District’s open spaces to one another and provide access between neighborhoods and nature. In some cases, they provide stream buffers or visual edges within communities. There are many different kinds of trails, serving a range of recreational and transportation functions. Recent trail planning efforts have focused on improving bicycle mobility and waterfront access, and on ~~and~~ as well as showcasing the District’s ~~city’s~~ cultural, historic, and scenic resources. Trail planning is an integral part of park and open space planning. It is, both a means of improving access to parks and a means of developing new trails within parks. 815.1

815.2 Key trail-building initiatives include the Anacostia Riverwalk Trail and Fort Circle Parks ~~Hiking~~ Hiker-Biker Trail (both referenced in the previous section),

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the Metropolitan Branch Trail between Union Station and Silver Spring, the Watts Branch Trail, the Georgetown Waterfront Trail, **the Broad Branch Road NW connection between the Western Ridge Trail and Soapstone Valley Trail**, and the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail ~~Plan~~ (PHNST). The PHNST is of particular interest, as it is one of the country's 22 scenic national trails and includes multiple strands extending from the Chesapeake Bay to western Pennsylvania. Several of these strands pass through **Washington, DC** ~~the District of Columbia~~. 815.2

815.3 ~~In 2005, the District adopted an updated Bicycle Master Plan, including recommendations for improving bike routes and completing bike trails and bridges across the city. Among the key recommendations are eliminating gaps in the trail network, improving access along the Anacostia River, and linking the District's trails to a larger regional network. The Bicycle Plan also recommends coordination with the National Park Service to improve off-road trails like those traversing the National Mall, Rock Creek Park, Watts Branch, and Oxon Run (see Table 8.2).~~ **The Bicycle Element of moveDC, released in 2014, includes many recommendations to improve bicycle facilities and infrastructure, such as expanding and upgrading the network of shared-use paths to eliminate bicycle network gaps, and facilitating and supporting development of regional and national trail routes.** Additional details on the **Bicycle Element of moveDC** ~~Bicycle Plan~~ may be found in the Transportation Element of this Comprehensive Plan. 815.3

815.4 ~~Table~~ **Figure** 8.5: Trail Improvements Recommended **by moveDC** ~~the DC Bicycle Master Plan~~ 815.4

Anacostia Park Trail/Prince George's County's Colmar Manor Park Trail
Gallatin Street NE Trail/Prince George's County's Trail Connection to West Hyattsville Metrorail Station
Long Bridge Trail/Mount Vernon Trail in Arlington County
New York Avenue NE Trail/Prince George's County's Colmar Manor Park Trail
Oxon Run Trail/Prince George's County's Oxon Run Trail
Pennsylvania Avenue SE Trail/Prince George's County's Pennsylvania Avenue B bicycle L ane/ T rail
Rock Creek Park (Beach Drive NW) T rail/Montgomery County's Rock Creek Trail
Suitland Parkway Trail into Prince George's County
South Capitol Street Trail into Oxon Hill Farm and Prince George's County

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- 815.5 ***Policy PROS-3.4.1: Trail Network***
Develop a network of trails, paths, and linear parks to link the District's open space areas and improve access to open space. Trails and paths should provide a safe and convenient way for residents to experience Washington, DC's scenery and natural beauty on foot or by bicycle. 815.5
- 815.~~5~~6 ***Policy PROS-3.4.2: Linear Park Connections***
Work with the federal government to improve connections between the open spaces within the District of Columbia through land acquisition and park dedication, particularly where "gaps" in the ~~city's~~ District's open space network exist. Attention should be given to acquisitions that better connect the Fort Circle Parks and improve shoreline access. 815.6
- 815.7 ***Policy PROS-3.4.3: ~~Protecting~~Preserving Natural Features***
~~Protect~~Preserve the scenic qualities of trails and the parklands they traverse. This includes designing trails to reduce erosion and tree removal, and ~~protecting~~preserving the integrity of the settings that make each trail unique. 815.7
- 815.8 ***Policy PROS-3.4.4: Trails in Underutilized ~~Rights-of~~Way***
Develop multiuse ~~multi-use~~ trails in underutilized ~~rights-of-way~~rights-of-way, including surplus railroad corridors, ~~and~~ undeveloped street ~~rights-of-way~~rights of way, ~~and possibly alleys~~. 815.8
- 815.9 ***Policy PROS-3.4.5: Trail Dedication***
~~Require~~Trail dedication should be required, as appropriate, on privately-owned development sites along the District's streams, waterfronts, and linear parks. 815.9
- 815.10 ***Policy PROS-3.4.6: Trails and Rivers***
New development along the Anacostia and Potomac rivers should provide public right-of-way for trail connections and extensions where needed, and to construct trails according to applicable design standards and guidelines.
815.10
- 815.11 ***Policy PROS-3.4.7: Trails and the Environment***
Limit the effects of trails on natural areas and open space by using environmentally responsible building materials, paving to prevent erosion where necessary, and locating new trails in areas that will minimize the degradation of sensitive environmental areas. Recognize that trails have broader environmental benefits, such as reducing vehicular traffic and emissions. 815.11

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- 815.12** *Policy PROS-3.4.8: Multijurisdictional Coordination*
Work closely with other jurisdictions and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) to provide a regional system of trails. Continually seek to connect District trails with those in bordering jurisdictions and complete a regional system of trails. 815.12
- 815.1013** *Action PROS-3.4.A: Bicycle ~~Trail~~ ~~Master Plan~~ Implementation*
Initiate focused trail planning and construction efforts to eliminate gaps in the bicycle trail network and to improve substandard trails, as itemized in moveDC. the District's Bicycle Master Plan. Coordinate with the National Park Service NPS on for trails where for which both DDOT and NPS have responsibility. Support District and federal agencies, including DDOT and NPS, in developing, funding, and building multiuse trails within select parks that can connect to the District-wide trail system. Work with NPS to align District planning and implementation efforts with the NPS National Capital Region Paved Trails Study (2016), which calls for coordination with local jurisdictions to advance trail projects that contribute to the success of the regional trail network.
815.1013
- 815.14** *Action PROS-3.4.B: District-wide Bicycle Network*
In support of Sustainable DC, continue to develop a District-wide 100-mile bicycle lane network. Prioritize bicycle connections to parks and recreation facilities. 815.14
- 815.1115** *Action PROS-3.4.CB: Signage and Parking*
Provide more consistent and unified signage along the city's District's trails to improve their identity and accessibility. Provide secure bike parking at trailheads and key destinations. 815.1115
- 815.1216** *Action PROS-3.4.DC: Water Trails*
Continue to Ddevelop designated "water trails" and water access points in the Potomac and Anacostia Riversrivers for travel by canoe, kayak, and other paddlecraft. 815.1216
- 816** **PROS-4 Maximizing ~~Our~~ Assets 816**
- 816.1** The Parks and Recreation Master Plan estimated that meeting the projected parks and recreation needs of the District would require \$1.2 billion in capital funds over the next 20 years. The government of the District of Columbia District government has neither the land nor the dollars to completely fill parkland gaps and meet future the recreational needs on its own. of its residents. In addition to capital costs, competing budget needs make it difficult to deliver optimal levels of services, maintenance, and programming. In 2015, the District spent about \$162 per capita, per year on its park system. While this was slightly above the average for large U.S. cities, more resources may

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be required to meet District goals for quality and equity. Through collaboration and partnerships, community resources can be leveraged to dramatically improve access to open space and recreational services. Agreements with the federal government, public and private schools, local colleges and universities, ~~and the District's~~ major employers, **and others in the private sector** are an important part of the ~~city's~~ **District's** efforts to broaden recreational choices for all residents. 816.1

816.2 Maximizing ~~our~~ assets also means redefining “open space” to include more than just parkland. Broadly defined, open space includes cemeteries, golf courses, reservoirs, institutions, parkways, military bases, and even private lawns and backyards. In this context, the value of open space may be its contribution to the ~~city's~~ District's form rather than its use for recreation. Preserving a balance between development and open space is important in all District neighborhoods and essential to the health of the community. Similarly, provisions for high-quality open space in new development—including amenities such as balconies, courtyards, and landscaping—is important to the psychological well-being of future residents and the aesthetic qualities of the **District**~~city~~. 816.2

817 PROS-4.1 Maximizing Access Through Partnerships 817

817.1 The need for joint planning to coordinate federal and District open space planning has been mentioned throughout this ~~e~~Element. In 2005, the District, ~~NPS the National Park Service~~, and ~~NCPC the National Capital Planning Commission~~ launched the CapitalSpace Initiative to increase access to green space for District residents and visitors (see ~~the~~ CapitalSpace text box). Its ~~particular~~ focuses ~~is~~ on improving access to parks in neighborhoods where they are in short supply, such as Central and Northeast DC. **NCPC continues to work with partnering agencies to implement the plan's recommendations, including the coordination of planning and management of small parks among the various park and planning agencies for efficiency and the promotion of investments across all small park resources. In 2017, NPS developed the Small Parks Management Strategies Plan, which lays out several management options to achieve that goal. In addition, NCPC maintains the Parks and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital (Federal Elements), which includes policies for improved coordination between the federal and District governments.** Similar joint planning and design exercises should be pursued with the District's ~~P~~ublic ~~S~~chools and with other local governments in the region. 817.1

817.2 More recently, public-private partnerships have been recognized as a way to develop and operate new parks. Such partnerships can facilitate the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of park and recreational facilities, offering a win-win for local government and private partners. Typically, the private partner provides the capital funds or operating services in exchange

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for a return on investment over the life of the project. The public benefits by getting new facilities at a lower cost. Recent park improvements at the Yards and Canal Parks were completed in this manner, creating some of the District's most popular recreation spaces and facilities. A number of ingredients are required for success, including a sound business plan, realistic revenue forecasts, a commitment to programming and maintenance, and sustained and equitable access for all District residents. 817.2

817.3 There are several different forms of public-private partnerships. Real estate development provides a range of opportunities, such as the renovation of aging recreation centers in exchange for allowing private development above it or adjacent to it. Allowing private concessions in parks or in recreation centers is another example. In other cases, recreation center hours might be extended to allow a third party to provide services. The District could also lease space in its recreation centers to nonprofit service providers with missions that are compatible with the mission of DPR, such as health and wellness organizations. In all of these cases, such partnerships should take care to preserve the fundamental function of parks as open spaces and places for public gathering. 817.3

817.~~2~~**3a** Text Box: CapitalSpace ~~817.2~~
Over 23 percent of Washington, DC's land area is devoted to parks and open spaces, ranging from the formal circles and squares established by the L'Enfant Plan to neighborhood "pocket parks", large forested stream valley corridors, recreational centers, and waterfront parks. Planning, ownership, and management of these different areas ~~is~~ are provided by different branches of the District government, the federal government, and, occasionally, ~~nonprofit~~non-profit organizations. **817.3a**

817.3b ~~The DC Department of Parks and Recreation, the National Capital Planning Commission DPR, NCPC, the DC Office of Planning (OP), and NPS the National Park Service have~~ joined together for the ~~in an~~ new initiative, CapitalSpace Initiative, to establish a shared planning framework to address all of the parks and open spaces within the District. **817.3b**

817.3c CapitalSpace is an opportunity to achieve a seamless system of high-quality parks and open spaces meeting both national and local needs; addressing the often competing~~often competing~~ demands placed on these spaces; clarifying their appropriate uses; ~~ensuring that~~ providing established and new neighborhoods ~~have~~ access to adequate parkland; and developing strategies to best use scarce resources to design, program, and maintain parks and open spaces according to the highest possible standards. **817.3c**

817.~~3~~**4** The philanthropic community is another important partner. Foundations, "friends" groups, and other charitable or advocacy organizations offer

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significant potential for funding. Nonprofit service providers also provide recreational facilities and programs for District residents. Groups like the United Planning Organization, Friendship House Association, the Boys ~~and~~ & Girls Clubs of America, and the YMCA/YWCA fill gaps in local recreational services as they pursue their missions to foster the spiritual, mental, and physical development of individuals, families, and communities. Local colleges and universities also provide athletic programs and community services, many for free or at greatly reduced costs. These entities should not be viewed as competitors to **DPR** ~~the District's own Department of Parks and Recreation,~~ but ~~rather~~ as partners that can help increase recreational access for all. 817.~~34~~

817.5 **Building a world-class park system is not only a governmental responsibility. It is a collective effort that requires the contribution of private businesses, institutions, nonprofits, residents, and community organizations.** 817.5

817.46 ***Policy PROS-4.1.1: National Park Service Partnerships***
Promote expanded partnerships with ~~the National Park Service~~ **NPS** and other District agencies to broaden the range of recreational opportunities available to District residents. 817.~~46~~

817.57 ***Policy PROS-4.1.2: Joint Planning and Management Strategies***
Develop joint planning and management strategies for all parks ~~where~~ **for which** the District ~~of Columbia and National Park Service~~ **and NPS** have overlapping responsibilities. Use coordinated standards for lighting, fencing, walkways, maintenance, and security in these areas. 817.~~57~~

817.68 ***Policy PROS-4.1.3: Greener, More Accessible Schoolyards***
Work with ~~the District of Columbia Public Schools~~ **DCPS** to improve the appearance and usefulness of schoolyards and outdoor recreational facilities such as playgrounds and athletic fields. Strive to make such areas more “park-like” in character, **with increased tree canopy**, especially in communities without access to District-operated parks. 817.~~68~~

*See the Educational Facilities Element for policies on ~~joint-use~~ **joint-use** agreements between the District ~~G~~government and **DCPS** ~~DC Public Schools~~.*

817.69 ***Policy PROS-4.1.4: ~~Non-Profit~~ **Nonprofit** Recreational Facilities***
Support the development of nonprofit recreational facilities, such as Boys ~~and~~ & Girls Clubs, to meet the recreational needs of District residents and complement the facilities provided by the District. 817.~~69~~

817.810 ***Policy PROS-4.1.5: Regional Open Space Planning***
Support federal, interstate, and multi-jurisdictional-efforts to preserve open space and create interconnected greenbelts and hiking trails within and around the Washington region. 817.~~810~~

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- 817.~~9~~11 *Action PROS-4.1.A: CapitalSpace*
Complete **implementation of** the CapitalSpace Initiative, which ~~will~~ provides a coordinated strategy for open space and park management between the District and federal governments. 817.~~9~~11
- 817.~~10~~12 *Action PROS-4.1.B: Expanding Partnerships*
Provide an annual~~Develop a comprehensive~~ **list of**~~current~~ **parks and recreation partnerships, including “friends” groups, program partners, inter-agency government partners, and sponsors that support District parks, recreation facilities, and programs. In concert with community members and agency staff, create an action plan to recruit new business, philanthropic, nonprofit, and governmental partners in the region to enhance park and recreation services benefitting residents and visitors.** ~~detailed information on the scope and responsibilities of partnership agreements. Prepare a marketing plan aimed at solidifying new partnerships with universities, museums, professional sports teams, churches, and philanthropic groups.~~ 817.~~10~~12
- 817.~~11~~13 *Action PROS-4.1.C: Sponsorships and Foundations*
Explore opportunities for financial sponsorship of park and recreation facilities by corporate and nonprofit partners, foundations, and “friends” organizations.
817.~~11~~13
- 817.14 *Action PROS-4.1.D: Joint-Use Partnerships*
Consider alternative joint-use partnership models with DCPS and nonprofit service providers, and select and implement the most effective approaches.
817.14
- 817.15 *Action PROS-4.1.E: Cooperative Management Agreements*
Develop a District-wide strategy for securing cooperative management agreements with NPS and other federal partners to update, operate, and maintain federally controlled parks in Washington, DC. 817.15
- 818 **PROS-4.2 Recognizing the Value of Functional Open Space** 818
- 818.1 Functional open space refers to undeveloped land used for purposes other than parks and conservation. Such space comprises hundreds of acres of public and private land in the District, including sites that are valued for their large trees, scenic vistas, and natural beauty. Some of these sites are regarded as public amenities, with features like hiking trails, ~~and~~ lawns for picnics, and other forms of recreation. Such spaces are particularly important in neighborhoods like Brookland, where conventional parks are in short supply. There and elsewhere in the District, the grounds of seminaries, hospitals, and cemeteries are informally serving some of the functions usually associated with a neighborhood park. 818.1

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- 818.2 Retaining public access to these assets is important to the well-being of surrounding neighborhoods. Even where public access is not possible, the role of these spaces in improving the physical environment and shaping the visual quality of ~~our~~ **District** neighborhoods should be acknowledged. 818.2
- 818.3 ***Policy PROS-4.2.1: Institutional Open Space***
Encourage local institutions—, such as private and parochial schools, colleges and universities, seminaries, hospitals, and churches and cemeteries—, to allow the cooperative use of their open space lands for the benefit of District residents.
Explore funding and insurance mechanisms that would incentivize and preserve local institutions that choose to provide cooperative use. 818.3
- 818.4 ***Policy PROS-4.2.2: Utility Open Space***
Recognize the value of undeveloped land associated with utilities, reservoirs, and other infrastructure facilities in providing visual buffers for adjacent neighborhoods and opportunities for recreational trails. 818.4
- 818.5 ***Policy PROS-4.2.3: Parkways and Medians***
Enhance the visual and open space qualities of Washington, **DC**'s streets and highways through the landscaping of medians, traffic islands, and **rights-of-way** ~~rights-of-way~~. **If sufficient right-of-way is available, consider use of these spaces for active recreation.** 818.5
- 818.6 ***Policy PROS-4.2.4: Freeway Joint Use***
Where compatible with adjacent land uses, support the use of land under or adjacent to freeways or other **limited-access** ~~limited-access~~ roadways for passive open space, public art, or other uses ~~which~~ **that** enhance the usefulness and appearance of such land. 818.6
- 818.7 ***Policy PROS-4.2.5: Podium Parks***
Consider the development of ~~“podium” type~~ **podium-type** open spaces and parks in the air rights over below-grade freeways **and urban federal highways**, including the I-395 ~~Freeway~~ through Downtown **Washington**, DC, ~~and the~~ Southeast-Southwest Freeway near Capitol Hill, **and the underpasses of North Capitol Street.** 818.7
- 818.8 ***Action PROS-4.2.A: Zoning Assessment of Institutional Land***
~~Conduct a study of institutional land in the city to determine the appropriateness of existing zoning designations, given the extent of open space on each site. Among other things, this study should assess how current zoning policies, including large tract review, planned unit developments, and campus plans, work to protect open space. Recommend zoning changes as appropriate to conserve open space and avoid incompatible building or redevelopment on such sites. This study should include a “best practices” assessment of how other cities around the country achieve the goal of conserving functional open space without impairing~~

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~~economic growth or reducing development rights.~~ Completed – See Implementation Table. 818.8

819 PROS-4.3 Open Space and the Cityscape 819

819.1 Improving open space is part of the District’s broader vision of “building green and healthy communities.” The Sustainable DC Plan envisions a District with high-quality, well-connected habitats on land and water providing strong corridors and ecosystems for wildlife. The following policies seek to increase the amount of open space in Washington, DC, and preserve ~~the city and protect~~ open space where it exists today. Although these spaces are often small, they collectively make an important contribution to the livability of the District~~city~~. 819.1

819.2 ~~The District’s Zoning Regulations currently require “residential recreation space” when multi-family housing is developed in commercial zones. Depending on the zone district, up to 20 percent of a building’s floor area may be required to be set aside as residential recreation space, including rooftops, courtyards, and indoor recreational facilities. Additional z~~ Zoning provisions seek to retain open space by setting lot coverage limits; and front, rear, and side yard requirements. The maximum area that may be covered by structures varies from 40 percent to 75 percent in residential zones and from 60 to 100 percent in commercial zones. “Creation or preservation of open space” is also defined as a public benefit or public amenity for the purpose of granting additional density in a Planned Unit Development (PUD). 819.2

819.3 *Policy PROS-4.3.1: Open Space in the Downtown Landscape*
Sustain a high-quality network of downtown pocket parks, courtyards, arcades, plazas, and rooftop gardens that provide space for recreation, scenic beauty, and outdoor activities for workers, visitors, and residents. 819.3

819.4 *Policy PROS-4.3.2: Plazas in Commercial Districts*
Encourage the development of high-quality, multifunctional, and publicly accessible outdoor plazas around Metro station entrances, in neighborhood business districts, around civic buildings, and in other areas with high volumes of pedestrian activity. Design plazas to be reflective of neighborhood preferences, to serve as gathering spaces, and to function as green infrastructure. Use the ~~planned unit development~~ PUD process to promote such spaces for public benefit and to encourage tree planting, public art, sculpture, seating areas, and other amenities within such spaces. 819.4

819.5 *Policy PROS-4.3.3: Common Open Space in New Development*
~~Provide incentives~~ Work with developers for new and rehabilitated buildings to include “green roofs”, rain gardens, landscaped open areas, and other common open space areas that provide visual relief and aesthetic balance. 819.5

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- 819.6 ***Policy PROS-4.3.4: ~~Protection~~ Preservation of Open Space in Multi-Family Development***
Recognize the implicit value of the lawns, courtyards, gardens, and other open areas that surround many of the District’s older high- and medium-density residential buildings. Discourage the practice of building on these areas if the historic proportions and character of the original buildings would be compromised. 819.6
- 819.7 ***Policy PROS-4.3.5: Residential Yards***
Recognize the value of residential yards as a component of the ~~city’s~~ **District’s** open space system, and discourage increased coverage of such areas by buildings and impervious surfaces **while balancing that value against other District priorities such as the creation of affordable housing.** 819.7
- 819.8 ***Action PROS-4.3.A: Residential Recreation Space and Lot Coverage Requirements***
~~Complete an evaluation of DC Zoning requirements for “residential recreation space” and “lot coverage.” Explore the feasibility of requiring residential recreation space in high-density residential zones as well as commercial zones, and establishing specific conditions for lowering or waiving the requirements. Consider a sliding scale for lot coverage requirements which considers parcel size as well as zone district. Incentives for the creation of parkland, including increases in allowable density where parkland is provided, also should be considered.~~ **Completed – See Implementation Table.** 819.8

ⁱ **American College of Sports Medicine, 2018.**

ⁱⁱ **Trust for Public Land, 2018.**

ⁱⁱⁱ Policies for ~~the~~ **National** Park Service lands are contained in individual General Management Plans prepared by ~~the~~ **NPS**, and are also included in the Federal Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. There have also been several joint District-~~federal~~/**Federal** park planning initiatives launched since the 1960s.

^{iv} **Trust for Public Land, 2018.**